

SAFE HAVEN: A PLACE WHERE WOUNDED  
CLERGY WOMEN CAN RISE-UP  
AND SUCCEED

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **SAFE HAVEN: A PLACE WHERE WOUNDED CLERGY WOMEN CAN RISE-UP AND SUCCEED**

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The objective of this project was that of providing places where clergywomen who are wounded by the injustices of the institutional church can heal, accept their calling into ordained ministry and be empowered to serve in God's vineyard. The methodology used quantitative and qualitative research, pre and post test, and an analysis of interviews with successful clergywomen as a result of their healing. Findings indicate that women are able and capable of serving as pastoral leaders. It was concluded that women are not interested in competing institutionally, rather nurturing all people into a greater quality of life in Jesus Christ.

## INTRODUCTION

In the 18 years since her ordination, the Rev. Elaine Puckett has wrestled with whether she should be in the pulpit at all. When she left divinity school, Ms. Puckett, a United Methodist, thought that some day she might lead a large congregation in her hometown, Atlanta. Instead, she has shuttled between jobs as an associate pastor on someone else's staff or as the leader of a small congregation fighting to survive. In contrast, the men she was ordained with, for the most part, have moved on to run bigger churches. "You begin to question your competence," said Ms. Puckett, 58, an associate pastor at the large Embury Hills United Methodist Church in Atlanta. "When you look at the endless cycle of one appointment after another after another like these, your endurance runs low."

The trajectory of Ms. Puckett's career is familiar to many other women in the Protestant clergy. Whether they come from theologically liberal denominations or conservative ones, black churches or white, women in the clergy still bump against what many call the stained-glass ceiling — longstanding limits, preferences and prejudices within their denominations that keep them from leading bigger congregations and having the opportunity to shape the faith of more people.<sup>1</sup>

The above referenced article epitomizes the struggle for many clergy women within protestant and non-protestant faith traditions. The pain, anguish and suffering that clergywomen continue to openly endure are astounding. The 21<sup>st</sup> century has ushered in freedom, liberation, liberalism and unprecedented change in the economy, political landscape and world relations, yet the stigma of women infiltrating a male dominated profession of clergy leaders continues to be met with resistance, sexism, tokenism and patronizing male leadership.

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<sup>1</sup>The New York Times, "Clergywomen Find Hard Path to Bigger Pulpit," <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/26/us/26clergy.htm> (accessed July 5, 2010).

While there are a number of women who have risen above the strongholds to become leading clergy leaders, countless numbers of other clergywomen either suffer in silence in order to live out their call to ordained ministry with dignity and integrity or they push against the system and find themselves abused, wounded and cast out. This project document seeks to empower abused, wounded and marginalized clergywomen toward systems and organizations that allow for their full participation in advancing the Kingdom of God.

Chapter One of this ministry project focuses on the background of the author and her spiritual journey and how she arrived at the context in which she continues to fulfill her calling. This section also analyzes the author's context which includes the demographics of the community and outlines the process by which a new denomination emerged.

Chapter Two provides a literary review of the relevant resources that have already been written on this topic. The literary review provided the author the basis for her hypothesis and critical information in the formation of her ministry model. The author gleaned various concepts, methodologies and practices of clergywomen who had already experienced oppression at the hands of the male dominated institutional church. These models provided the framework for a new model of ministry formation geared specifically for clergywomen, yet applicable to all clergy who experience abuse from the institutional church.

Chapter Three builds a framework and establishes foundations for the model. It includes theological foundations which comprise male, womanist and feminist theologians and scholars illuminating the presence of God in the face of clergywomen's

abuse and marginalization. These writers give clergywomen hope and tenacity to press on toward the mark of their high calling in Christ Jesus. The biblical foundations provide instances where women have been marginalized throughout the sacred text and how, in the fullness of time, God provided for their empowerment. Finally, the historical foundations provide the chronological footprints of women who dared to step out on faith and take God at God's word in forging trails of ministry success within a system of institutional male domination.

Chapter Four discusses the methodology and the design of the model used in conducting the action research that resulted in data used to validate her hypothesis.

Chapter Five discusses the field experience (mentioned earlier). It contains data collection methods and data analysis objectives. This chapter was critical to the overall work of the author as it became the *how to* or process of replicability for other clergywomen to follow.

Finally, Chapter Six presents the author's reflections on the field experience, summation and conclusion. In this chapter the author also discusses what could have been done differently and offers suggestions to clergywomen and others on how to systematically and methodically press their way toward ministry success and effectiveness in a male dominated profession.



## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **MINISTRY FOCUS**

Bishop Estella Edwards Shabazz is the Chief Presiding Prelate of The New Afrikan Methodist Christian (N. A. M. C.) Church. This new denomination is inspired and dedicated to providing clergywomen a platform to serve God without threat of reprisal and rejection from a male dominated institution. In assuming the position of Chief Presiding Prelate of N. A. M. C. Church, Bishop Shabazz reflects and remembers the journey that empowered her to ministry success and vitality.

Bishop Shabazz was born to the union of Johnnie Lula Edwards and Henry William Edwards, Sr. Bishop Shabazz was born in the late 1950's and was a product of the 1960s era of Southeast Georgia during times of the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Civil Rights Movement. Her life is a reflection of the lives of those who raised her and their stories are elements found in most African-American life stories; individually and collectively. Bishop Shabazz grew up in an active household that directed her to the second major institution in her life; the church. Going to church was like going to school, it was weaved into the fabric of her regular weekly agenda. She was not absent from school, and church followed in the same order.

Bishop Shabazz was baptized in 1962 at Saint Philip Monumental African Methodist Episcopal (A. M. E.) Church, Savannah, Georgia. St Philip later became the church of her spiritual beginnings.

At Saint Phillip Monumental A. M. E. Church, Bishop Shabazz rose within the ranks of the Young People Division (YPD), where she ultimately became its local church director and a District Director as a young adult. As a District Director, Bishop Shabazz was afforded the opportunity to address her congregation several times as the Youth Day Speaker. It was during this period in her life that affirmed her destiny as a future leader in the church.

Rev. Peola Scott, interim pastor at Saint Phillip became a role model for Bishop Shabazz in 1988. Rev. Scott was the only female pastor in St. Philip's history, a distinction that stands even to this day. Bishop Shabazz fondly remembers actively serving the church as a member of the Junior Steward Board, the Stewardess Board, and the Women's Missionary Society. As Bishop grew and matured in her service of the church, she sang in the Youth Choir, the Young Adult Gospel Choir and the Worship Gospel Choir. She also was privileged to serve as Vice-President of the Lay Organization and Board of Stewards.

At the age of 21, Bishop Shabazz began visiting Holy Zion Holiness Church in Savannah, Georgia with some of her gospel choir associates. While attending Holy Zion Holiness Church, she received the power of the Holy Spirit. She remembers that this was the point when she fully received Christ in her heart and life.

In 1986, at the age of 27, Bishop Shabazz received her call to ordained ministry. God made it very clear to her that the purpose of her call was to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ. Bishop Shabazz understood her God given mission as being that of ministering, preaching, teaching, overseeing, escorting, and loving all of God's people.

Bishop Shabazz married Yusuf Shabazz in 1990. The couple was entrepreneurial minded and later would start and operate several successful businesses. God blessed them with two daughters born to their union.

The years after giving birth were happy, yet filled with confusion and growing pains. Her new marriage was not like the love stories she loved to watch on television and at the movies. Bishop Shabazz was 30 years old when she married and had their first child at the age of thirty-two. Being young in motherhood with two little girls who were born twenty-two months apart was different and challenging.

Before marriage and children, Bishop Shabazz was only responsible for herself. The statement *Mothers are the first teachers and caregivers of civilization* became a reality to the Bishop. She was thankful to God for the support and guidance from her mother, her oldest sister and the babysitter who helped her with her daughters. Although help was available, Bishop Shabazz found herself overwhelmed with many family and work obligations causing her to stop attending church.

Bishop Shabazz began using Sunday's as a day of rest due to sheer exhaustion. Time passed and the Bishop began to miss church related activities knowing that God's plan for her life was incomplete.

In 1986, her parents were in a car accident prohibiting her father from carrying out the duties of his janitorial service business. God instructed Bishop Shabazz to go and work the business. The Bishop's father started this business in 1982 and worked it alone until she and her oldest sister came and expanded the business until mid 2006. Through God's grace and mercy, the Bishop's territory enlarged moving her from being employee to employer.

In October 1998, her parents would have celebrated their 45<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary. However, by the grace of God they renewed their wedding vows on March 14, 1998. Estella's father would transition from this life into eternity on July 11, 1998. Estella and her older brothers would give *Reflections of a Father* at the funeral. Shortly in the years to follow, the Bishop would lose two of her brothers in death; she spoke at their funerals.

Over time, Bishop Shabazz made her way back to St. Philip Monumental A.M.E. Church and rededicated her life to the Lord on what would have been her father's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. After the death of her father, the Lord reminded the Bishop that she should stop procrastinating and begin walking in her calling. She was not as strong in the Lord when she returned, but she remembered the scripture that said "wait on the Lord and be of good courage".<sup>1</sup>

To regain strength, she recommitted her life to serving the Lord. Her husband and children became active in this great move of God by becoming regular attendees of the church. By the author's obedience to God, her life was changing spiritually, emotionally, socially and professionally.

In 1986, God called Bishop Shabazz to be a laborer in God's Great Harvest. In 2002, she answered the call. She preached her initial sermon, one day after her birthday, in 2002, following the approval of the church conference at St. Philip Monumental A. M. E. Church. She believed that everything in the universe fits properly into God's schedule; therefore, all the glory and honor belong to God!

<sup>1</sup>Ps 27:14 (NRSV).

In December 2002, Bishop Shabazz was admitted to Turner Theological Seminary at the Interdenominational Theological Center (I. T. C) in Atlanta, Georgia. Although juggling family, schoolwork, business, and travel was a challenge; with the help of God, she reached her goal within two and one half years. On May 7, 2005, Bishop Shabazz received a Master of Divinity degree with a concentration in Theology at Turner Theological Seminary, at the I. T. C.

The next level of servanthood for the Bishop was serving as pastor. She received two Certificates of Pastor's Appointments on April 1, 2005 and April 7, 2006 from [REDACTED], Presiding Bishop of the Sixth Episcopal District of the A. M. E. Church (Georgia). She served as Pastor of the Bethel A. M. E. Church in Clyo, Georgia.

On September 15, 2006, the Bishop's mother transitioned into eternity. Bishop Shabazz gently closed her mother's eyes and held her in her arms on that early morning. She preached her mother's Eulogy from Ecclesiastes 3:1-9 using as her subject, *The Declining Day*.

In 2007, the Bishop returned to St. Philip Monumental A. M. E. Church as the Assistant Pastor. On April 12, 2007, she was the first woman in the 141-year history of the Georgia Annual Conference of the A. M. E. Church in the Sixth Episcopal District to be ordained as an Itinerant Elder with a Master of Divinity Degree.

As is the custom, at the 142 Session of the Georgia Annual Conference of the A. M. E. Church, Bishop [REDACTED] affixed the pastoral appointments for the upcoming conference year. When Bishop [REDACTED] finished making appointments, then Rev. Shabazz name was not included in those being appointed. After the conference concluded, then Rev. Shabazz met Bishop [REDACTED] at the steps of the pulpit to request

an appointment. He refused; she again asks him only to hear him say, “What part of *No* do you not understand.” Total devastation came upon then Rev. Shabazz body, spirit and soul from Bishop [REDACTED] response. However, God had another plan; even though Bishop [REDACTED] said no, God said yes.

In June of 2008, Bishop Shabazz received her acceptance letter as a new doctoral student at United Theology Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. Her focus would be Congregational Development and New Faith Communities. The title of her project would be, *Wounded Clergywomen: Rising Up and Succeeding In A Male Dominated Vocation*. This title would later be modified to *Safe Haven: A Place Where Wounded Clergywomen Can Rise Up And Succeed*. From the core of her pain, Bishop Shabazz believes that despite the abuse, woundedness, discrimination, injustice, and sexism in the church, platforms for ordained clergywomen to lead and succeed in ministry must be exemplified in every generation.

In order for ordained clergywomen to exercise their spiritual gifts in pastoral ministry and serve the church in prominent leadership positions, denominations and women -focused churches need to be established or made available for clergywomen’s kingdom work. It is not enough to continue celebrating independent clergywomen who have succeeded when there are overwhelming numbers of women who have been victimized, marginalized and ostracized at the hands of their male counterparts, all in the name of Jesus. We can certainly develop a list of clergywomen who are pastoring congregations all over America; however, the list would pale in comparison to those untold stories of abuse, neglect and rejection of nameless women who have heard and

answered the call of God to go and preach the Gospel, only to be denied by a male patriarchal system.

The context for this project is The New Afrikan Methodist Christian (N. A. M. C.) Church, a new denomination inspired and dedicated to providing clergywomen a platform to serve God without threat of reprisal and rejection from a male dominated institution.

Institutional religious systems repressed the Bishop's experience like its legendary founder Richard Allen causing her to start a new church family. How soon we sometimes forget from whence we come. Ironically, and in a grand exposition of selective amnesia, Bishop [REDACTED] did to the then Rev. Shabazz what white trustees of St George's church did to Richard Allen, the founder of African Methodism in 1787 as Steve Klots writes:

While praying, Allen was interrupted by the sounds of a scuffle taking place at his side. Unable to ignore the commotion, he looked up to see a trustee of the church forcibly pulling Jones off his knees, ordering him away from his seat. Apparently, blacks were not even allowed to sit in the gallery.

Wait until the prayer is over, "Jones replied, trying to preserve the sanctity of the service. "No, you must get up now, or I will call for aid and force you away," answered the trustee. "Wait until the prayer is over, and I will get up and trouble you no more, Jones pleaded.

But the trustee would not wait. He called to another trustee who, according to Allen, then attempted to pull White from his knees. Allen said of this moment, "By this time the prayer was over, and we all went out of the church in a body, and they were no more plagued by us in the church." Storming down the gallery stairs and out into the streets, the black members of St. George's, led by Allen, Jones, and White, vowed not to return. No longer would they feel obligated to seek permission from the Methodist hierarchy at St George's to form a parish because that church had proved first indifferent, then hostile to their presence. A time had come for a black church, a church that would serve the need of the black community of Philadelphia. In that moment of confrontation,

the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church, although many years from becoming a functioning reality, was born.<sup>2</sup>

Hurt and pain from the deep piercing wounds experienced from the dominant male leadership of the A. M. E. Church opened her eyes to the unfair realities of ordained ministry for women and those who inspire to become major leaders in the church. After serving tirelessly in the A. M. E. Church since childhood, Bishop Shabazz was faced with obstacles. The defining factor was gender. After completing all the requirements for ordained pastoral service, her Bishop denied her for an appointment while several less qualified men were appointed.

However, in the words of Steve Klots concerning Richard Allen and the initial founding members of the A. M. E. church, “No longer would they [she] feel obligated to seek permission from the Methodist hierarchy at St. George’s to form a parish...”<sup>3</sup> For then Rev. Shabazz, God had opened a door of opportunity for her and thousands of other women who continue to be denied their rightful place in ordained ministry.

One of the systemic realities of the institutional church is around issues of marginalization of women in ministry. Marginalization for our purposes means preventing someone from having attention or power. It also means to take or keep someone away from the center of attention, influence or power. Documentable evidence supports the notion that women are marginalized by men based on inconclusive interpretation of the biblical text. Therefore, when a woman desires to be ordained and move upward into leadership status in the institutional church, male clergy leaders block their path using sexism, tokenism, placation and other forms of abuse.

<sup>2</sup>Steve Klots, *Richard Allen: Religious Leader and Social Activist* (New York, New York, Chelsea House Publishers, 1991), 16-17.



Bishop Shabazz is desirous of providing a place where clergywomen who are wounded by the injustices of the institutional church can heal and be empowered to serve. A place where clergywomen can go and know they can trust the leadership, where living water is flowing freely, and a place where the love and power of God resides. A place where there are no false promises in reference to leadership opportunities and no verbal abuse from male clergy leaders. Her charge and task is the founding of a denomination of inclusion where healing of the wounded, especially wounded clergywomen can take place and opportunities for women to serve as pastoral leaders would not be restricted.

As we turn our attention to Chapter Two, we will be looking at information that is currently in print about wounded and abused clergywomen serving the institutional church. In this chapter we will seek to find relief for clergywomen and identify resources that are available to provide a balm to soothe the pain of institutional abuse. We also hope to identify the various arguments that exist among male clergymen and female clergywomen and how this issue is being handled and dealt with as systemic issues in the life of the church in general.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE STATE OF THE ART IN THIS MINISTRY PROJECT

In this chapter we will explore several areas of significance to this project; ordination in general, ordination of women, and obstacles and challenges for ordained clergywomen.

It has been the author's experience that answering the call to ordained ministry as a called out, prepared and anointed woman of God has not been an easy road. It reminds her of the poem by noted poet Langston Hughes entitled *Mother to Son*:

Well, son, I'll tell you:  
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.  
It's had tacks in it,  
And splinters,  
And boards torn up,  
And places with no carpet on the floor—  
Bare.  
But all the time  
I've been a-climbin' on,  
And reachin' landin's,  
And turnin' corners,  
And sometimes goin' in the dark  
Where there ain't been no light.  
So, boy, don't you turn back.  
Don't you set down on the steps.  
'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.  
Don't you fall now—

For I'se still goin', honey,  
 I'se still climbin',  
 And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.<sup>1</sup>

How vividly she remembers the moment of horrid pain. How heartbreaking her experience of total rejection. How humiliating the moment of sheer disappointment. But as the poem by Langston Hughes suggest; Bishop Shabazz has not stopped moving forward and she is still climbing, for life for Bishop Shabazz has been no crystal stair. What a common chorus of rejection, oppression and sexist humiliation at the hand of ordained men of God. What a common refrain of support and acceptance from the congregation of both men and women.

As a result of overt and ongoing disregard for God's call on the lives of clergywomen all over the world, both Womanist and Feminist movements have emerged to speak to the gross misinterpretation of the sacred text, the lack of pliability in liturgy, and the systemic effects it is having on the church of today.<sup>2</sup>

It is clear, womanist and feminist from every corner of the world are determined to stop walking away from their calling from God angry and hurt. They have formed a coalition born out of their intrinsic ability to love, nurture and bare pain. They have formed alliances, hosted workshops and seminars and began writing about an issue that has been keep silent for far too long. Clergywomen have decided that *the rocks do not have to cry out for them* any longer; that they are going to walk in their calling, speak truth to power, educate and empower women who dare to accept God's call and emerge

<sup>1</sup>Langston Hughes, *Mother to Son*, <http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/mother-to-son/> (accessed December 2, 2009).

<sup>2</sup>Angela D. Washington, "When The Rocks Stop Crying" (Sermon, Floyd Chapel Baptist Church, Stockbridge, GA, October 8, 2008).

as a significant answer to the ongoing religious and spiritual impotence that continue to plague our country and our world.<sup>3</sup>

### **Ordination in General**

In most Protestant churches, ordination to the ministry of preaching is the rite by which their various churches recognize and confirm that an individual has been called by God to ministry, acknowledges that the individual has gone through a period of discernment and training related to this call, and authorizes that individual to take on the office of ministry. For the sake of authorization and church order, and not for reasons of *powers* or *ability*, individuals in most mainline Protestant churches must be ordained in order to preside at the Sacrament of Baptism and a ceremony similar to the holy Eucharist, and to be installed as a *pastor* of a congregation or parish.<sup>4</sup>

Ordination has a basic understanding and meaning for the protestant church in general and provides specificity for each denomination that ordains. In the book entitled, *Who Will Go For Us*, Dennis M. Campbell makes the case for ordination in our time. He states that much has changed from the early days of ordination. He says that today, few churches are encouraging persons in the pew to consider a vocation in ordained ministry. Campbell refers to the cost of seminary education, the time it takes from receiving the call to ministry to being ordained and then he discusses the plight of first time pastors trying to survive on salaries that are well beneath the education and sacrifice made to be ordained.

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<sup>4</sup>Ordination, The Meaning of Ordination in the Protestant Church, <http://www.terrasancitaguild.com/ordination.htm> (accessed November 4, 2009).

Campbell says a great deal is at stake. The ordained ministry has a critical impact on the lives of people who attend church. The future of the church as well as the future of the world is dependent on the quality of leadership of ordained clergy; women and men who go into the difficult places of life to bring a healing balm to all who would hear and receive. It is with this level of zeal that Campbell says ordained ministry is not about what you give up but is all about what you receive. What you receive will far exceed the value of any other vocation. As an ordained clergy person, you are given the authority to be the voice, hands, ears, eyes and heart of Almighty God; and this calling is second to none.

Campbell in another book on ordination entitled, the *Yoke of Obedience: The Meaning of Ordination in the United Methodist Church* provides a step by step understand of the process of ordination. In this offering, Campbell takes the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church's requirement for ordination and provides answers to some of the most common questions such as the kingdom of God, justification, grace and baptism. In this book, Campbell also tackles some of the tough question of ministry such as suicide and rape.<sup>5</sup>

Another perspective on Ordination is offered by Stephen V. Sprinkle entitled, *Ordination: Celebrating the Gift of Ministry*, Sprinkle says that Christian ordination is both an invitation and a mandate to practice theology honestly, with our eyes wide open. It is a challenge to the whole church to either put up or shut up when it come to the

<sup>5</sup>Dennis M. Campbell, *The Yoke of Obedience: The Meaning of Ordination in the Methodist Church*, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997).

incarnation of Emmanuel, *God-with-Us*. Sprinkle believes that ordination is a rite of the church that touches many members of the community of faith.<sup>6</sup>

While those who are ordained are required to study theology as a way of life, it also affects their family, their friendships and everybody they come in contact with. Ordination makes it possible for the whole church to participate in theological discourse and share in the gospel. Since Christian theology is faith seeking understanding; it stands to reason that the ministry of the ordained is the Holy Spirit's way of widening the circle of those who participate in this great ministry.<sup>7</sup>

Thomas B. Doseman offers, *Holiness and Ministry: A Biblical Theology of Ordination*, as an ecumenical perspective on ordination leaving the individual specifics to the individual ordination institutions. Doseman's book is a response to the World Council of Churches' mandate for a comprehensive Biblical theology of ordination. There are a number of theologies of ordination based on various religious faith systems; however, in the grand scheme of things, there is no biblical blueprint that is comprehensive in scope. In *Holiness and Ministry*, Doseman seeks to be faithful to both the Old and New Testament scriptures in identifying a theology that represents the Mosaic tradition of the Torah which later informed the practices found in the New Testament. By making this argument, Doseman provides critical validity for a theology of ordination that goes above and beyond the current role and office of pastor.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Stephen V. Sprinkle, *Ordination: Celebrating the Gift of Ministry* (Atlanta, GA: Chalice Press, 2004), 6-7.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, 8-9.

<sup>8</sup>Thomas B. Doseman, *Holiness and Ministry: A Biblical Theology of Ordination*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008.), 3-5.

Scholars writing on the meaning of ordination in general makes a concerted effort to posit ordination as more than a rite of the church. With divergent views, each writer sees the sacred text as the basis for what it means to be ordained. This means that the call of clergypersons has more to do with God than it does with the institutional church. It has more to do with what God is up to in the world than it does with maintaining patriarchal and oppressive systems based on an imprecise interpretation of the original text. We could argue at length about hermeneutics, redaction theory, exegesis and other scholarly methods of biblical interpretation, however, the point of this project is to make the case for the empowerment of women in their quest to participate fully in the call of God on their lives as pastors.

Thus, ordination, especially the ordination of women becomes God's way of continuing the shepherd's model for leading God's people to freedom, liberation and salvation. When viewed from the biblical perspective, the church has an important role in educating its laity on the importance of ordination as an act of God. Both the ordained and the laity have a responsibility to guard the word of God as a sacred covenant. Those who hold the office of the ordained must also take the task of theology, ecclesiology and critical reflection as critical to their vocation as preaching and administering the sacraments. It is in the engagement of the sacred text through critical analytical reflection that the word of God has flesh and dwells among us.

### **Ordination of Clergywomen**

In an article by Dr. Paula D. Nesbitt entitled, *Women's Ordination and Possibilities*, Nesbitt takes the Catholic church to task while trying to encourage, embrace

and empower Catholic clergywomen to take heart and learn from the lessons of Protestant clergywomen in their quest for full rights as ordained clergy. As a Catholic, Nesbitt believes that the most radical feminist theology has come from Catholic clergywomen. In their quest for recognition by the Catholic Church, Catholic clergywomen have taken up different concerns from their Protestant sisters. While Protestant women have been concerned with how to get placements as women clergy, Catholic women have been questioning "why clergy, especially in their traditional roles?" To make the case for Catholic clergywomen, Nesbitt explores six lessons that can be learned from her Protestant sisters.<sup>9</sup>

The first lesson is that women's ordination does not mean that it is available to women everywhere, or that opponents won't try to reverse it. For instance, women have been ordained in the Episcopal church for well over 25 years, however, because of a concise clause, bishops who did not believe in women's ordination could be absolved from having to oversee and pastor women clergy in their dioceses. Thus, they could block women's ordination.

In 1998 at the Lambeth Conference of Bishops representing the Anglican Communion a resolution was passed affirming the conscience clause. Even though Lambeth does not have binding authority, there are two implications. First, those who do not want women clergy can appeal to the collegial spirit of Lambeth by claiming *conscience*. Second, conservatives have used the Lambeth resolution to pressure their

<sup>9</sup>Paula Nesbitt, *Woman's Ordination Conference: A Voice for Women in the Catholic Church*, <http://www.womensordination.org/content/view/32/117/> (accessed December 4, 2009).



own churches to reinstate the conscience clause, leaving women clergy vocationally dependent on the attitude of their bishop.<sup>10</sup>

Lesson Two was once the door has opened to women's ordination, denominations also have found ways to benefit from women clergy; ways that women have not anticipated. Lesson two revealed that women were so eager and determined to serve in ministry that they would often work for free or less than their credential demanded. Women would also serve in lesser roles with men who had less or no credentials for the position they were serving in.<sup>11</sup>

Lesson Three was that time does not heal all discrimination and inequities. In the Episcopal Church 40 percent of priest ordained annually are women, yet change has been slow in the direction of gender parity. Women have been invaluable to rank and file ministry, but they are still not well represented in positions where they have the resources and voice to influence denominational doctrine and practices.<sup>12</sup>

When Episcopal and Unitarian Universalist (U. U. A.) female clergy are compared, the latter that have had access to ordination since the nineteenth century, a similar gender gap emerges. In 1980 two-thirds of U. U. A. ordinands were female, yet the gender gap in attainment was the largest of any cohort examined.<sup>13</sup>

Lesson Fours was that women clergy have found that there is not necessarily safety in numbers. With a growing number of women clergy, internal diversity is bound

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

to occur. Twenty years ago, women clergy in many dioceses were too few to support a caucus. Now, many women don't sense the need for it. Lack of communication allows those opposed to gender parity to divide and conquer, playing off one woman against another. Even with the election of Women Bishops, research shows that they were selected and mentored precisely for their prophetic ability, as their male mentors gained some prestige from their success. However, after ground is broken, *maintenance tokenism* often results in women with somewhat different commitments and experiences.<sup>14</sup>

Lesson five was that clergy women, by their presence, nonetheless catalyzed social change. In one incident cited, a male Bishop walked out of a Bible study being led by a female Bishop. Because of male peer pressure, women Bishops and pastors feel constrained to change the Church from a traditional authoritarian leadership model to one that was more relational.<sup>15</sup>

In concluding her research, Nesbitt reports that one day while attending mass, one of the male Catholic priest took her aside to the sacristy for about an hour and instructed her by saying: When you're a priest, remember to warm the water for babies at baptism so they will not cry. When you're a priest....minds and hearts do change when they see or even imagine women as priests and bishops. Despite the problems of gender parity, women's ordination does embody hope for a transformed, inclusive Church indeed representative of the full Body of Christ.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

In the book, *The Hidden History of Women's Ordination*, by Gary Macy, Macy says that history is replete with references to the ordination of women. There are rites for women ordination, canonical requirements for ordaining women and particular ministries that only ordained women performed. Yet there are still controversies over what the sources meant when they referred to women being ordained. And the fact that these controversies exist, says more about the history of early Christianity than it does about the existence of the sources themselves. The central argument of the later centuries is that women were incapable of being ordained; and if this is so, it makes the case for women not being ordained.<sup>17</sup>

Macy cites the most common explanation for sources for women being ordained in early Church history, especially among those who deny women's ordination, has to do with *real* ordination versus consecration or blessing. The word real when referred to ordination implies that there is a fixed definition of ordination according to Church history, or that one definition from Church history is sufficient for all history. However, Macy says the determination of a definition of ordination is not an historical issue; rather it is a theological issue. It would require that each denomination or ordaining entity must decide the criteria for ordination and then determine if the criteria is eternal or mutable over time. Historians do not make this determination; therefore, any ceremony that fits the criteria established at that time for ordination is considered an ordination.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Gary Macy, *Hidden History of Women's Ordination*, [http://www.amazon.com/Hidden-History-Womens-Ordination-Medieval/dp/0195189701#reader\\_0195189701](http://www.amazon.com/Hidden-History-Womens-Ordination-Medieval/dp/0195189701#reader_0195189701) (accessed January 5, 2010).

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

Mark Chaves writes in his book, *Ordaining Women: Culture and Conflict in Religious Organizations* that the sharp increase in women being ordained has prompted some interesting comment from the scholastic community. He says considerable work is being done to showcase the preparation of women who or who try to become ordained as clergywomen leading denominations and local congregations. Chaves argues that while many deny the validity of women's ordination, they are making their claim based on inconclusive and arbitrary data. In order to be credible, Chaves says that ordination rules that govern and regulate clergywomen should be based on practice and performance. In order for women to have full clergy rights, ordination rules and practices must be applied equally for men and women.<sup>19</sup>

While many denominations verbally acknowledge that they fully support and equally deploy clergywomen, their actual experience shows that they constantly deny women key leadership roles and responsibilities. These denominations justify their position by claiming that while women and men are equal when it comes to ordination, there are some positions that are ideologically complimentary to men rather than women. In essence, Chaves argues that there are sharp disparities between the rules and policies of denominations and their actual practice of clergy deployment. His work is designed to challenge the integrity of these denominations and to empower women about how they

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<sup>19</sup>Mark Chaves, *Ordaining Clergy Women: Culture and Conflict in Religious Organizations*, [http://books.google.com/books?id=yUWz24sVu54C&printsec=frontcover&dq=ordaining+women&source=bl&ots=2Aolr1E0r\\_&sig=WzImWtsW8xZqIFkjh5Nx08w09w8&hl=en&ei=7CpXTJiVG4G88gbG-eSGAw&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&ct=result&resnum=7&ved=0CDsQ6AEwBg#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=yUWz24sVu54C&printsec=frontcover&dq=ordaining+women&source=bl&ots=2Aolr1E0r_&sig=WzImWtsW8xZqIFkjh5Nx08w09w8&hl=en&ei=7CpXTJiVG4G88gbG-eSGAw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=7&ved=0CDsQ6AEwBg#v=onepage&q&f=false) (accessed January 5, 2010).

can systematically and categorically avoid the pitfalls of rule and practice when dealing with denominational politics.<sup>20</sup>

Michael McCoskey makes a strong case for not ordaining women by referencing the biblical text in an article entitled, *Why We Cannot Ordain Women*. In his article, McCoskey says that the real problem in the issue of the ordination of women is that most are not going to submit to the authority of the Scriptures. What Paul said does not seem to matter today; therefore we can expect to see more churches bow to secular pressure and accept women in their pulpits. In spite of increasing pressure to ordain women, Baptists must hold tenaciously to the Word of God and refuse to bow to any pressure. We must stand against the compromising winds of the day and lead the fight against creeping liberalism. May God grant us grace to do so in love.<sup>21</sup>

The author is clear, the case for women's ordination is not a easy road and life has not been a crystal stair for them to climb. The struggle continues, but at the expense of clergywomen who have been victims instead of victors in the fight to make disciples of Jesus Christ according to the Great Commission. It is for this cause that the author is adamant about developing a place where clergywomen can heal and then be empowered to fully accept the call of God on their lives without the threat of reprisal from a male dominated vocation that is seeing its better days.

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Michael McCoskey, *Why We Cannot Ordain Women*, Southern Baptist Journal, August 1997, 11, <http://www.baptistpillar.com/bd0146.htm> (accessed January 6, 2010).

### **Obstacles and Challenges for Women in Ministry**

Our attention is now turned to some of the challenges and obstacles that women face in their quest for full ordination rites. Every since the prophet Joel declared that “your sons and daughters will prophesy,” the church has not quite known what to do with woman in ordained ministry. According to Sharon Predovich in an article entitled, *Overcoming the Obstacles of Women in Ministry*, everyone called of God has challenges and obstacles in their ministry but she sees women as having some unique challenges and obstacles that men do not have to contend with.

First is the issue of submission. Predovich say she was scrutinized extensively regarding her submissive nature. She had always thought of herself as a submissive person, but when ministry became her goal, submission became an issue she had to grapple with and fully understand. She said as young believers, she and her husband Bill encountered well-meaning Christians who suggested that they submit themselves to their authority. Many felt Bill needed to keep me under his thumb even when it came to leading prayer meeting and Bible study. Being new to the ways of God, the couple really had to trust that they were hearing the Lord's voice. At some point in their journey together, God taught them that submission was an attitude of the heart. From that point on, the Lord began to speak to Predovich about submitting to God and to her husband in appropriate ways. We could mutually trust and work as a unified team.<sup>22</sup>

The second obstacle was the idea that women can be easily deceived. Predovich recalls that as a female pastor, she was constantly challenged by both men and women.

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<sup>22</sup>Sharon Predovich, *Overcoming the Obstacles of Women in Ministry*, Ministry Today Magazine, <http://www.ministriestoday.com/index.php/ministry-leadership/women-in-leadership/7302-overcoming-the-obstacles-to-women-in-ministry> (accessed January 15, 2010).

Many people would come to her and use scripture to create doubt and uncertainty because she was young and new to the ministry. Eventually, she discovered that if she trusted in God in all things, God would give her the ability to discern those things that are true and those things that were deceptive in nature. Through this process, she learned to trust her heart and follow the direction of God's yearning and calling.<sup>23</sup>

Other obstacles cited by Predovich are the fear of a man, the church's system of titles and positions, the challenge of having a unique lifestyle, of being a senior pastor, of being in control and the fear of rejection. Predovich says that once she learned to overcome these obstacles, her ministry began to blossom and flourish. Predovich sees a bright future for women in ministry who dare to brave the challenges, obstacles and roadblocks set before them by both men and women who are not ready for change and the radical outpouring of the Holy Spirit to meet the issues of today's time.

For those clergywomen who take on this challenge, Predovich sees more women discovering their God-given potentials and receiving divine calls, men awakening to the gifts of women and encouraging their development to advance the Lord's work, a new vocabulary emerging in the church to incorporate women into ministry where old terminology that degrade women will be shunned. She sees many female-led ministries developing in foreign countries and operating with tremendous favour, authority and power, more female pastors successfully leading churches and being welcomed into their communities and denominations, women apostles developing networks of female ministers, male pastors encouraging their spouses alongside them in team ministry. She finally sees a strong evil force coming against all of these advancements. But even

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

though the enemy will try to prevent the further release of women for the Lord's work, the plan of God will not be stopped. God is in the business of setting captives free. For the female, her set time has come. This is a new day and a time of new beginnings for women in ministry.<sup>24</sup>

J. Lee Grady, the author of the bestselling book, *10 Lies the Church Tells Women*, gives a ten step prescription for the church to empower women in ministry in his article in Ministry Today Magazine entitled, *Empowering Women Starts Here*. The steps are:

- 1) We must repent and apologize for gender prejudice. From the very beginning of the Christian era, we have allowed cultural prejudice against women to prevail in God's house. Male pride is the root of our sin.
- 2) Christian men must vocally defend the right of women to preach the gospel and lead the church. Throughout history, whenever women have been empowered as missionaries, evangelists and church planters, brave men were always willing to side with God on this issue. If the Lord of the harvest is sending our sisters, who are we to stand in their way?
- 3) The church must stop misusing the Scriptures to limit the ministry of women. For centuries the church has insisted that the curse of subjection and degradation placed on Eve must forever remain on all women, even though Christ redeemed them from the curse. We desperately need to be delivered from the spirit of the Pharisees. We have been quick to quote Bible verses out of context to justify our position.
- 4) Bible-believing churches must dismiss the notion that ordaining women is a 'liberal' position. We must make the distinction between secular feminism and biblical feminism, which has its roots in Scripture. If the Bible champions the idea that women are equal with men in the eyes of God and that they should be treated with fairness

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.



and respect, then this must become part of the gospel we preach.

- 5) The church must stop ignoring the ugly sin of domestic abuse. For too long, Christian women have been told that God requires them to submit to emotional and even physical cruelty in order to demonstrate obedience. The church must put an end to this madness. Husbands must learn to follow the Christlike model of servant-leadership, which empowers others instead of seeking to control and dominate.
- 6) Christian women must respond to injustice with forgiveness; not revenge. Anger has fueled the secular feminist movement. But women who desire to overcome the stronghold of patriarchal pride must do so by trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit and by exhibiting a Christlike attitude of humility and selfless love. This doesn't mean they should keep their mouths shut, but they must not allow a root of bitterness to poison the message they prophesy to the leaders of the church.
- 7) The church must reject human control from male and female; and settle for nothing less than the Holy Spirit's direction. Many conservative churches vehemently oppose allowing women to serve in positions of leadership because they think God blesses the church only under the leadership of men. How ridiculous! God does not want God's church to be controlled by men or women. God wants it to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.
- 8) We must take reconciliation and healing to women who have been offended by the church. Women have been the backbone of the church despite the fact that they have been denied opportunities to lead it. They have provided the bulk of financial support for most churches as well. Do we honestly believe that men alone are going to reach all of the lost people in our society?
- 9) We need to encourage millions of women to go to the mission field in the 21st century. Men cannot fulfil the Great Commission alone; this was never Christ's intention. In fact, when He was describing the way the world would be evangelized, Jesus compared the process to a woman putting leaven in three pecks of meal " 'until it was all

leavened" (Matt. 13:33, NAS). It is interesting that Jesus used a parable involving a woman to describe how the gospel would spread globally from one insignificant city in Israel.

- 10) Christian women must take an active stance in this crucial hour. We are in a war. People are perishing. The call of God rests on you, and when you stand before Him on the last day, He will not accept lame excuses such as, "I was a woman, and they told me to be quiet," or "They told me a man had to do that." In this hour God is rallying an army of Esther's who are willing to risk their lives, break patriarchal traditions and contradict society in order to rescue a generation.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>J Lee Grady, *Empowering Women Starts Here*, Ministry Today Magazine, <http://www.ministriestoday.com/index.php/ministry-leadership/women-in-leadership/7302-overcoming-the-obstacles-to-women-in-ministry> (accessed January 15, 2010).

## CHAPTER THREE

### THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

#### Historical Foundations

The New Testament says very little about pastors. In fact, as a term for ministers, the word (*poimen*) appears only once in Ephesians 4:11. While the word is familiar to use from modern usage, we are uncertain as to the exact role of pastors in the New Testament or how they functioned in relation to elders, bishops and other leaders. Probably all these roles were fluid, being in the formative stages.<sup>1</sup>

The meaning of the New Testament word *pastor* is *shepherd*, and so we think of pastors as leaders who tend a flock. Psalm 23 speaks of the Lord as our Shepherd, teaching, leading, guiding and providing for us. Jesus called Himself the Good Shepherd, setting a model for all true spiritual leaders who lay down their lives for the sheep. When Jesus called Peter the second time after His resurrection, He asked him to *feed my sheep*. Thus, pastors are to nurture people and help them to grow.<sup>2</sup>

While the New Testament does not tell us specifically what pastors did, we do know that both men and women provided spiritual leadership for churches which met in their homes. In the early church, almost all Christian meetings were held in private homes. Among these house-church pastors was Mary, the mother of John Mark, who later became a missionary with the Apostles Paul and Barnabas. It was to her house

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<sup>1</sup>God's Word To Women, "Women In The Early Church," <http://www.godswordtowomen.Org/pastors.Htm> (accessed July 5, 2010).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

church that Peter came in Acts 12:12 after an angelic visitor set him free from prison. The Bible says that many had assembled there and were praying, no doubt petitioning God for Peter's release. Their prayers were answered!<sup>3</sup>

Another house church leader was Chloe, according to 1 Corinthians 1:11. In this passage, Paul relates that *some of Chloe's household* had reported that there was strife among the Corinthian Christians. Those Chloe sent with this message to Paul were probably Christians who were members of her house church. They may have been relatives or household servants, or they may have been Christians who lives in the area and gathered at her home for worship. These believers would have come under Chloe's spiritual guidance, care and protection. But Chloe's influence extended beyond her own flock. Evidently, she had sent a deputation from her house church to Paul, who knew her or knew of her, to inform him of the need for correction in the Corinthian church. She was a trusted leader and source of reliable information for the apostle Paul.<sup>4</sup>

To be ordained was to be placed in an order. Women in the New Testament and early church served in orders parallel to the orders of men: pastors and deacons. Today women study in seminary the orders of men and search in vain for orientation about women. Because we do not find women there, we have the impression that women never served the church. We do not study the many documents that give instructions about women.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Women Pastors In The New Testament With Citations From Church History, <http://home.netcom.com/~cplampin/Lessons-on-Christian-Women/pastors-nt-eng/01-index-pastors.htm> (accessed July 5, 2010).

The often repeated statement that the New Testament does not show women as pastors, is not true. In fact, especially the passages of I Timothy 5 and Titus 2 that give their qualifications and duties are often used against them. The fact is, because women do not study the great body of material about the service of women, they do not know church history, and they do not understand the New Testament as to the ministry, qualifications and duties of women pastors in the church.<sup>6</sup>

All women who served the early church had to be unmarried. Because the early church could not resolve the situation of the woman in marriage that developed under paganism and Judaism in the Near East, the church could not conceive of a married woman being free to obey God. That is the theological question that they left for today's women to solve: is marriage an obstruction to the Christian woman serving God in positions of leadership in the church?

In the manual of the early church, *The Testament of Our Lord*, written by Bishop Clement of Rome sometime during 400 C.E., there is a night hymn of praise for a widow in which she should give thanks for the liberty from the servitude of marriage. "Thou who hast freed me from servitude that I may serve a servitude to God; the Mighty One who [art] forever, who sees all, that I may praise Thee uncondemned."<sup>7</sup>

Today it is recognized that the widows are the authors of a series of six interesting writings called *The Acts of the Apostles*. They are dated between 100 and 250 C.E. In these early Christian writings, the first thing that a woman does after being converted is to not marry or to no longer have sexual relations with her husband. In one of the works attributed to the widows, *The Acts of Xhantippe and Polyxena*, written late in the years

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

100 C.E., Polyxena and Rebecca talk about where they can flee so that they will not be forced to marry: Rebecca said, “It is indeed better for us to live with wild beasts and perish of hunger than to be compelled by Greeks and idolaters to fall into the filth of marriage.”<sup>8</sup>

The four New Testament passages that recommend that the wife submit herself to her own husband (Eph. 5:21-33, 6:5-9; Col. 3:18, 22-25; 1 Pet. 2:18-25--3:1-7, and Titus 2:2-5, 9-10) are in contexts that also speak to the slaves. Today we do not consider that the advice given to the slave is a justification of slavery, therefore, we consider that the advice given to the wife is a justification of the submission that in the early church was understood as servitude. This means that we interpret one part of the passage in one way and another part in another way.<sup>9</sup> When we are speaking of leadership in the church we need to reconcile those four passages.

Women pastors (presbuteras/presbutidas = women elders) were called widows in the New Testament and in the early church. We can get a New Testament mental picture of women pastors by studying the passages about widows and women pastors.

Acts 16:14-15, 40 tells us about Lydia, Paul's first European convert to Jesus, who offered Paul hospitality in her home. Scripture relates that when Lydia was converted, her entire household was baptized and that her home became the first meeting place for European Christians. Lydia was a business woman who traded in valuable, dyed garments. The fact that Scripture mentions no husband or father indicates the high prominence of this woman. Since first-century Greek and Roman women were almost always under the legal guardianship of a husband or father, Lydia may well have been a

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

wealthy widow or only daughter who inherited her parents' estate. Thus, she became the head of her own household. She either managed the family business or developed a business of her own after her husband's or father's death.<sup>10</sup>

The Book of Acts says that Lydia's entire household was baptized upon her conversion to Christ. This follows the custom of ancient Roman families. Under paganism, household gods were believed to protect and help the family and its enterprises. Thus, it was the duty of members of these households, relatives, slaves, and their families to worship the gods adopted by the head of the household. Roman households were often large since almost all businesses were home-based before the industrial age. Those who worked for Lydia in her business, and possibly others engaging in the trade who belonged to the dye-makers guild, would have been among her converts. By virtue of her position as head of household, Lydia had the opportunity and responsibility to lead all of its members to Christ and then to establish and lead them in the faith. This put her in a similar position to the modern-day pastor. To fulfill part of this responsibility, Lydia invited Paul to come and preach in her home.<sup>11</sup>

Paul and Silas established their gospel mission headquarters in Lydia's house and no doubt preached there regularly. After their release from prison, Scripture tells us that they returned to Lydia's and, having met with the brethren, exhorted them. This may have been the first church planted on European soil, and its pastor was a woman.

Throughout history, Christians have argued about how and who ought to be ordained –young or mature adults, well-educated or religious persons, married or celibate

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<sup>10</sup>God's Word To Women, "Women In The Early Church," <http://www.godswordtowomen.Org/pastors.Htm> (accessed July 5, 2010).

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.



persons, males or females, heterosexuals or homosexuals. In these debates, ordination is almost always understood to be more than a functional arrangement to get the work done. Persons who are ordained, both women and men are acknowledged to be especially gifted by God. After ordination, they carry an indelible mark that sets them apart for life from ordinary Christians, the laity.

All contemporary understandings of ordained ministry are grounded in the tradition that clergy are the called of God, to assume holy or priestly responsibilities, such as sharing God's message through preaching and officiating over the sacramental rites of the church (sacramental rites vary depending on denominational polity and doctrine) and administering the leadership of the church. Power and authority are given to those who are ordained.

The history of ordination is complicated by the fact that in the development of the Christian church in Western Europe; a conviction grew that ordained persons should be male and celibate. Recent research on the early church suggests that such a definition of ordination was not always the case. Ancient and medieval church records show that women have held key responsibilities for oversight, discipline, liturgy, teaching and service at various points in Christian history. Contemporary denominations argue over this legacy and some, such as the Roman Catholic Church, deny that women have ever had any claim to priesthood.

In early Christianity historically women were ordained and were Apostles of the church. Ute E. Eisen writes,

In Romans 16:7 designates a woman named Junia, and therefore a woman apostle, and is not the name of a man called Junias as had been repeatedly posited since the twelfth century. The masculine name Junias is not attested in antiquity, while the feminine Junia is



frequently encountered in Greek and Latin literature and inscriptions. The oldest and weightiest manuscript for Romans 16:7 reads one of two feminine names: Junia or Julia. Peter Arzt has subjected the evidence of the most important biblical manuscripts of Rom 16:7 as well as the text editions since Erasmus to an exhaustive examination, finding that the interpretation of the name as that of a man is a violent manipulation of the textual tradition that cannot be defended on text-critical ground. The same is true of the most important ancient biblical translations: The Old Latin and the most Vulgate manuscripts, with the sole exception of Codex Regimensis, read Juliam, that is the feminine name Julia. The Coptic translation clearly read Junia. These findings are confirmed by the most important New Testament text edition of the New Testament text editions since Erasmus<sup>12</sup>

In 1853 Antoinette Brown is the first woman since New Testament times ordained as a Christian minister, and perhaps the first woman in history elected to serve a Christian congregation as pastor; she was a member of the United Church of Christ. At her ordination a friend, Methodist minister Luther Lee, defends "a woman's right to preach the Gospel." He quotes the New Testament: "There is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."<sup>13</sup>

Historically, women have heard the call to preach through the *sounding brass and tinkling cymbals* of cultural biases, traditions, and sexism. The road was not easy and the burdens were not light for many paradigm-pioneering women who faced harsh criticism, rejection, isolation and even excommunication. Some were even threatened with bodily harm. According to Bishop Vashti McKenzie, every imaginable argument was used to deny what God has spoken into their hearts. The Bible, which gave them images of women with *like passion*, such as Deborah, Huldah, Mary Magdalene, and Phoebe, was used against them. Biblical interpreters labeled them, among other things, as heretics.

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<sup>12</sup>Ute E. Eisen, *Women Officerholders in Early Christianity* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 47.

<sup>13</sup>United Church of Christ, "First," <http://www.ucc.org/about-us/firsts.html> (accessed July 5, 2010).

Female leaders still responded to the call and made significant leadership contributions to the growth and maintenance of American religious institutions, both from the pulpit and the pew.<sup>14</sup>

From the sacred canon through today, women expressing the call to the gospel ministry still have to follow a path strewn with rejection, skepticism, struggle, and doubt, in spite of increased opportunities for ministry training and ordination. Bishop McKenzie says that the official rules regarding clergywomen were changed, but the unofficial traditions concerning *male-only* leadership positions remained the same. She says, the unofficial traditions still held that only men could serve as pastors, presiding elders, ruling elders, district superintendents, denominational heads, or bishops.<sup>15</sup>

According to McKenzie, women were often ordained into ministry and then tolerated. They were offered little or no assistance. It was not unusual for women to be stranded to navigate the passageways of ministry alone. Nevertheless, women continue to enter the ministry in increasing numbers.

The majorities of African American clergywomen serve excellently and efficiently churches with two hundred or fewer congregants. One of the next challenges to sexism in the church is for clergywomen to move beyond *first appointment* churches or entry-level positions. Clergywomen face a *glass ceiling* or stained glass ceilings of their own. The advancement up the denominational ladder is within view, but women have been unable to move in significant numbers beyond the local church to serve in denominational positions and on the Episcopal level to effect change and /or be a part of the decision dynamic on the denominational level. Another challenge is to move beyond

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<sup>14</sup>McKenzie, Vashti M., *Not Without A Struggle* (Cleveland, OH:The Pilgrim Press, 2001), 22-23.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 35.

the tokenism of the *first and only woman* elected or appointed to this, that or the other.<sup>16</sup>

The United Methodists have granted full ordination rights to females since 1956, but only in this decade have women entered the ministry in appreciable numbers. Presently 766 women are serving under appointment, and several hundred more are enrolled in seminaries. There is ample evidence that women clergy see themselves as bringing special gifts and graces to the practice of ministry, but they believe that the church has not yet allowed them to make the fullest use of those gifts both for their own professional development and for the enrichment of the whole church. One of those gifts is preaching. Clearly, anyone who bemoans the decline of the pulpit craft has not been hanging out in the right sanctuaries. The styles of the white and ethnic minority women who preached for the week's services varied widely, but some generalizations are possible.

First of all, the best sermons were firmly grounded in Scripture, applying the biblical word to the nitty-gritty of daily life. The themes were often unapologetically autobiographical, using the preacher's own life experience as the starting point for theology. At their best, these preachers were freed up from a dependence on a manuscript, and style was as important as content in conveying the message. That style was often warm, informal and colloquial, laced with humor. The preacher was sure of herself and of her faith. There was a dramatic flair, an unselfconscious exuberance in sharing the word. Women have assumed firm, strong, assertive voices that carry to the back row of a sanctuary.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 40.

<sup>17</sup>UMC's Women Clergy: Sisterhood and Survival, *Christian Century*, [www.christiancentury.org](http://www.christiancentury.org). (accessed July 5, 2010).

Hearing a woman preacher for the first time is a mind-blowing experience not yet encountered by many Protestant congregations nor even by some female clergy. Serving as leaven in the loaf, black women transformed the whole assembly. As the preacher shared with her colleagues the joys and trials of being a clergywoman, there were not only nods of assent but verbal responses signaling recognition of those experiences common to all their lives: *Yes, that's how it is for me too.*

At this point in their history, many women clergy are preoccupied with career issues—with survival or success—in the United Methodist itinerant system. The dilemma often involves the choice between ambition for upward mobility in a hierarchical system and efforts to change that very system. Whereas most other Protestant denominations operate under a *call* organization, with each congregation hiring and firing pastors on its own, in United Methodism's itinerant plan, ministers are appointed to pastoral charges by the Bishop. The unemployment problems suffered by clergy in other denominations are minimized, for under current United Methodist policy, every fully credentialed pastor is guaranteed an appointment. But signing on with the itinerant arrangement means accepting the Bishop's authority to determine where one will serve, and being willing to go where one is sent.<sup>18</sup>

### **Biblical Foundations**

The Bible is full of texts that speak to the role of women in the unfolding of salvation history. The Old Testament reveals some extraordinary women who, impelled by the Spirit of God, share in the struggles and triumphs of Israel and contribute to its

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

salvation. Their presence in the history of the people is neither marginal nor passive: they appear as true protagonists of salvation history.

After the crossing of the Red Sea, the sacred text emphasizes the initiative of a woman inspired to make this decisive event a festive celebration: "Then Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and dancing. And Miriam sang to them: 'Sing to the Lord, for God has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider God has thrown into the sea.'"<sup>19</sup>

Genesis twenty-one verse fourteen says, "So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba."<sup>20</sup> Most ordained clergy women who seek leadership, power and authority are represented by Hagar in this context. They are assigned churches in very rural areas and sent on assignment with very little support.

The mention of feminine enterprise in the context of a celebration not only stress the importance of woman's role, but also her particular ability for praising and thanking God. The action of the prophetess Deborah, at the time of the Judges, is even more important. After ordering the commander of the army to go and gather his men, she guarantees by her presence the success of Israel's army, predicting that another woman, Jael, will kill their enemy's General. To celebrate the great victory, Deborah also sings a

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<sup>19</sup>Ex 15:209-21.

<sup>20</sup>Jgs 19:24-25.

long canticle praising Jael's action: "Most blessed of women be Jael,...of tent-dwelling women most blessed."<sup>21</sup>

Those who lead must not forget the spiritual conditions of those being lead. A true leader is concerned about the people as a first priority. A true leader knows how to equip and minister by using their gifts to God's glory while brings people to faith in Jesus Christ.

Deborah's story shows and proves she was not power hungry. She wanted to serve God. Whenever praise came her way, she gave God the credit. She did not deny or resist her position in the culture as a woman and a wife, but she never allowed herself to be hindered by it either. Her story shows that God can accomplish great things through people, especially women, who are willing to be led by God.

Despite living in a male-dominated culture, she served as head of state, commander-in-chief and chief justice. Deborah's life challenges women in several ways. She reminds women of the need to be available, both to God and others. She encourages women to spend their efforts on what they can do, rather than worrying about what they cannot do. Deborah challenges women to be wise leaders. She demonstrates what a person can accomplish when God is in complete control. Deborah's strengths and accomplishments are that she is the only female judge of Israel. She has special abilities as a mediator, advisor and counselor when called on to lead, was able to plan, direct and delegate; known for her prophetic power and a writer of songs.

Just as Deborah was called by God to obey God completely, it is an undeniable fact that God has called and anointed thousands of women to serve God's people, to

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<sup>21</sup>Jgs 5:24.

oversee, preach and teach the Gospel to all people. Deborah's achievements were many because she was committed and faithful to God's command to judge, protect and oversee the people of Israel and was lead to victory.

In the book of Judges, chapter nineteen verse twenty- four and twenty- five:

Here are my virgin daughter and his concubine; let me bring them out now. Ravish them and do whatever you want to them; but against this man do not do such a vile thing." But the men would not listen to them. So the man seized his concubine, and put her out to them. They wantonly raped her, and abused her all through the night until the morning. And as the dawn began to break, they let her go.<sup>22</sup>

The Bethlehem woman was not the full legal wife of the Levite; therefore he called her his concubine. Both women were treated like second class citizens just as sometimes women are treated today. They had no control over their lives putting them at the mercy of their attackers. "Rather than defending the women and proving themselves men by fighting it out with the attackers, the two cowardly men shamefully remained indoors while the Levite's wife was subjected to gang rape by the attackers."<sup>23</sup>

The Levite's wife was treated like most ordained clergy women: considered to be property, the procession of the man; she had no rights that men felt duty bound to respect; she was treated at a subhuman level; she was used for servitude and sexual pleasures; she was not respected. Some clergywomen are also treated like this woman, they are not respected for their mind, scholarship, training and calling; they was not respected for their spiritual nature.

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<sup>22</sup>Jgs 19:24-25.

<sup>23</sup>Adeyemo, Tokunboh, *Africa Bible Commentary* Nairobi, Kenya: WordAlive Publishers, 2006.

The significant role of women in the salvation of their people highlighted by the figures of Deborah and Jael, is presented again in the story of another prophetess named Huldah, who lived at the time of King Josiah. Questioned by the priest Hilkiah, she made prophecies announcing that forgiveness would be shown to the king who feared the divine wrath. Huldah thus becomes a messenger of mercy and peace.<sup>24</sup>

The events narrated in the Book of Esther signify another very difficult situation for the Jews. In the kingdom of Persia, Haman, the king's superintendent, decrees the extermination of the Jews. To remove the danger, Mordecai, a Jew living in the citadel of Susa, turns to his niece Esther, who lives in the king's palace where she has attained the rank of queen. Contrary to the law in force, she presents herself to the king without being summoned, thus risking the death penalty, and she obtains the revocation of the extermination decree. Haman is executed, Mordecai comes to power and the Jews delivered from menace, thus get the better of their enemies. Esther risks her life to win the salvation of her people by playing the role of mediator. She intercedes for those who are threatened with destruction.<sup>25</sup>

The intercessory role of Esther is later attributed to another female figure, Abigail, the wife of Nabal, in the book of 1 Samuel. Here too, it is due to intervention that salvation is once again achieved. Abigail goes to meet David who has decided to destroy Nabal's family, and asks forgiveness for her husband's sins. Thus she delivers his house from certain destruction.<sup>26</sup>

As noted, the Old Testament tradition frequently emphasizes the decisive action

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<sup>24</sup>2 Kgs 22:14-20.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>1 Sm 25.



of women in the salvation of Israel, especially in the writings closest to the coming of Christ. In this way the Holy Spirit, through the events connected with Old Testament women, sketches with ever greater precision the characteristics of Mary's mission in the work of salvation for the entire human race.

Isaiah 6:1-10 tells the story of the call of Isaiah. In these verses Isaiah is being prepared for service. Before committing to serving God fully, Isaiah admits his limitations and sin before God. He was unable to speak which became a symbol of his own remoteness and solitude from God. It was not Isaiah's decision for his sins and guilt to be burned away, but God was preparing him to be a prophet and commanded this to take place in his life.

Because the coal came from a consecrated altar, it served to atone and purify Isaiah by confrontation and comfort. At all times, humankind stands either in the mercy, favor, love and grace of God or under judgment. Isaiah was purified from sin and blessed against every expectation, can now hear the voice of God and answer God with righteous conviction. Therefore, in order to do the will of God, one must be able to recognize their sins and be set free from them.

Once purged of sin, Isaiah is convinced of God's perfection and power. This conviction gives Isaiah the ability to transcend human opposition to establish God's claim of omnipotence. God becomes Isaiah's Lord and King creating a covenant of obedience, loyalty and protection.

Once Isaiah accepted the methodology employed by God to purge him from guilt and sin, he was ready to learn step-by-step and day-by-day the extraordinary work God had in mind for him. Consequently, when God asked, "Whom shall I send, and who will

go for us?”<sup>27</sup> Isaiah did not hesitate and said, “Here am I; send me!”<sup>28</sup> The voice of God asked for a messenger who was sufficiently committed to go anywhere. There was no negotiated agreement on the terms of his prophetic calling. In this way only the holiness of God was made manifested.

The call of Isaiah is similar to the call of all persons of faith today. The clarion call of God in the hearts and minds of faithful servants both male and female is still “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” The call was not to a specific gender nor was the call to people of privilege; rather the call was to those who had ears to hear and to those who had a mind to work. Today like never before, God is looking for people who are willing to stand before the wiles of the devil and say what thus says the Lord for such a time as this. God is looking for faithful servants who are equipped, unashamed and unapologetic regardless of gender to share the Good News to a sin sick world.

1 Corinthians 14:34-36 has attracted much attention because of its subjectivity and interpretive differences.<sup>29</sup> The Apostle Paul brings to light the problems, demands, and struggles of the Corinthian church. There was division, lawsuits, immorality and questionable practices such as the abuse of the Lord’s Supper and the abuse of spiritual gifts taking place at that time.

Verses 34-35 of 1 Corinthians say, “Women should be silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as the law also says. If there is

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<sup>27</sup>Isaiah 6:8 (NRSV).

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Walter J. Harrelson, General Editor, *The New Interpreters Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), Vol. V. 971.

anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home for it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.”<sup>30</sup>

Reflecting on the interpretations of this section of the Bible that is considered to have been written by Paul, “all the interpretations that take the passage as authentic share one factor that we modern Christians should not fail to notice: All of them suppose that these verses are Paul’s response to a very particular and peculiar situation that has emerged at Corinth. Each of them assumes that Paul is not making church policy, but is reacting to a special problem regarding women at Corinth.”<sup>31</sup>

The New Interpreters Study Bible continues by saying:

This harsh passage, urging women’s silence in church and subordination to their husbands, with an unspecified reference to “the law” as support, is probably an insertion by an editor who subsequently to this Pauline letter and brought it into conformity with the practices regarding women in his own subsequent-to-Paul time. In the process of bringing the letter collection together, someone edited the correspondence; the degree of alterations is unknowable to us. The result of the editing can easiest be seen in 2 Corinthians where scholars find fragments of as many as five letters.<sup>32</sup>

The explanation continues by saying, “We are probably faced with a later insertion of a text whose posture is at odds not only with Paul’s relationships with women in other churches but also with what Paul has said about women earlier in 1 Corinthians.”<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>1 Cor 14:34-35 (NRSV).

<sup>31</sup>Harrelson, *The New Interpreters Study Bible*

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, 969.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*

Variations of the Book of Corinthians are further discussed.

Verses 34-36, with their injunction of women's silence and assertion of their subordination to men, vary from what we have seen in the rest of I Corinthians. First, it is clear that women *are* praying and prophesying in the church at Corinth (11:5) and Paul not only makes no effort to stop it, but seems to assume that it is quite proper. Second, note how Paul used the tradition reflected most clearly in Gal. 3:28—"there is neither male nor female:-to reckon the fundamental reciprocity between women and men in marriage and human sexuality. Further, 14:34-36 is singular when weighed against the picture and roles of women in all of the other undisputed Pauline letters.<sup>34</sup>

"The Pastoral Epistles of first and second Timothy and Titus are among the most valued of New Testament writings. Yet the Pastorals are among the most discredited in New Testament writings. They helped to establish the classic pattern of ministry and church structure (bishop, presbyter, deacon), which was crucial in the triumph of the early Catholic Church."<sup>35</sup>

The Apostle Paul, though older than Timothy, had travelled much with him, and was at one time imprisoned with him in Rome. Paul had converted Timothy to the faith and watched over him as a father. He often speaks of him as my son, and was peculiarly beloved by him. When Paul was driven from Ephesus he wrote the Epistle of Ephesians to Timothy for his direction.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Harrelson, Walter J. *The New Interpreters Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), Vol. XI.775.

<sup>36</sup>Stanton, Elizabeth Cady. *The Woman's Bible Parts I and II: American Women Images and Realities* (New York, NY: Arno Press, 1972), 161.

In the first letter of Paul to Timothy chapter two verses eleven and twelve we find Paul saying, “Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent.”<sup>37</sup>

Elizabeth C. Stanton states in her book:

Could Paul have looked down to the nineteenth century with clairvoyant vision and beheld the good works of Lucretia Mott, a Florence Nightingale, a Dorothea Dix and Clara Barton, not to mention a host of faithful mothers, he might, perhaps, have been less anxious about the apparel and the manners of his converts. Could he have foreseen a Margaret Fuller, a Maria Mitchell, or an Emma Willard, possibly he might have suspected that sex does not determine the capacity of the individual. Or, could he have had a vision of the public school system of this Republic, and witnessed the fact that a large proportion of the teachers are women, it is possible that he might have hesitated to utter so tyrannical an edict: “But I permit not a woman to teach.”

Had the Apostle enjoined upon women to do good works without envy or jealousy, it would have had the weight and the wisdom of a Divine command. But that, from the earliest record of human events, woman should have been condemned and punished for trying to get knowledge, and forbidden to impart what she has learned, is the most unaccountable peculiarity of masculine wisdom. After cherishing and nursing helpless infancy, the most necessary qualification of motherhood is that of teaching. If it is contrary to the perfect operation of human development that woman should teach, the infinite and all wise directing power of the universe has blundered. It cannot be admitted that Paul was inspired by infinite wisdom in this utterance. This was evidently the unilluminated utterance of Paul, the man, biased by prejudice. But, it may be claimed that this edict referred especially to teaching in religious assemblies. It is strikingly inconsistent that Paul, who had proclaimed the broadest definition of human souls, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male or female, but ye are one in Christ Jesus,” as the Christian idea, should have commanded the subjection of woman, and silence as essential to her proper sphere in the Church.

It is not a decade since a manifesto was issued by a religious convention bewailing the fact that woman is not only seeking to

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<sup>37</sup>1 Tm 2:11-12 (NRSV).

control her property, but claiming the right of the wife to control her person! This seem to be as great an offence to ecclesiasticism in this hour and this land of boasted freedom, as it was to Paul in Judea nineteen centuries ago. But the “new man” as well the “new woman,” is here. He is inspired by Divine truth that woman is to contribute to the redemption of the race by free and enlightened motherhood. He is proving his fitness to be her companion by achieving the greatest of all victories—victory over himself. The new humanity is to be born of this higher manhood and emancipated womanhood. Then it will be possible for motherhood to “continue in sanctification.”<sup>38</sup>

In reference to the early Christian church and the Apostle Paul, Stanton continues by stating:

“The doctrine of woman and the origin of sin, and her subjection in consequence, planted in early Christian Church by Paul, has been a poisonous stream in Church and in State. It has debased marriage and made both canon and civil law a monstrous oppression to woman. M. Renan sums up concisely a mighty truth in the following words: “The writings of Paul have been a danger and a hidden rock—the cause of the principal defects of Christian theology.” His teachings about woman are no longer a hidden rock, however, for, in the light of science, it is disclosed to all truth seeking minds. How much satisfaction it would have been to the mothers adown the centuries, had there been a testimony by Mary and Elizabeth recording their experiences of motherhood. Not a statement by them, nor one about them, except what man wrote.”<sup>39</sup>

Jesus is not recorded as having uttered any similar claim that woman should be subject to man or that in teaching she would be a usurper. The dominion of woman over man or man over woman makes no part of the sayings of the Nazarene. He spoke to the individual soul, not recognizing sex as a quality of spiritual life, or as determining the sphere of action of either man or woman.<sup>40</sup> In fact, Jesus affirmed both women and men

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<sup>38</sup>Stanton, Elizabeth Cady, *The Woman's Bible Parts I and II: American Women Images and Realities*. 163.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid. 163-164.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid. 164-165.

equally and used both women and men equally as part of his role in salvation history often to the dissatisfaction of the men of that day.

2 Corinthians argues decisively that God will deliver those who have been marginalized, victimized and are rejected by mankind. The passage begins with God's consolation in the face of afflictions and distress and concludes with a note of hope and thanksgiving.<sup>41</sup>

Blessing God is another way of giving thanks, but the blessing of God is especially to be employed when we hit hard times. It is a way of remembering, a way of reminding ourselves, and one another, that God has delivered us in the past—indeed, that God's nature is to deliver. The God of the exodus is our God. Our recitation of God's faithfulness, via our blessing of God, should not only help us to remember God's deliverance in the past, but also assist our trusting—and even eager—expectation that God's comfort will somehow find us in our present distress. Our God delivers and comforts. The very act of looking for deliverance or comfort is the first faithful response, which itself may help us to see the exodus that is perhaps already graciously before our eyes.<sup>42</sup>

Paul, being at the end of his rope, can provide us with a model for dealing with affliction. By all evidence of his letters, he had innumerable hardships and difficulties. As down and out as he was sometimes he received comfort from God and trusted that God would not let distress have the last word.<sup>43</sup> This passage can be used to argue for the sake of women in seeking entrance and ordination into pastoral ministry. It clearly shows that as a messenger of God, God will provide comfort in times of hardships and difficulties. For women who are the victims of ordination discrimination, and who, after meeting all the qualifications for ordination are denied pulpits from which to exercise their

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<sup>41</sup>Harrelson, Walter J. *The New Interpreters Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), Vol. XI. 40.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, 44.

obligations to God, in God's own time, their change will come.

In Galatians 3:28 the statement is made that there is no longer male and female, the third element breaks the formal pattern of the previous opposition. What is the reason for this change? Paul is echoing the language of the Old Testament Book Genesis 1:27: "male and female God created them." To say that this created distinction is no longer in force is to declare that the new creation has come upon us, a new creation in which even gender roles no longer pertain."<sup>44</sup>

### **Theological Foundations**

*For me, the preaching experience is best conveyed in the image of God and Jacob wrestling. There is a combination of feelings, like a wound and a blessing, I'm never sure if I'm meeting an angel or a demon in the sermon preparation delivery.*<sup>45</sup>

Lee McGee believes that it is imperative to understand the concept of voice which transcends the notion of male verses female clergy style. She asserts that understanding the importance in the preaching ministry is just as valuable as understanding the fields of education and psychology. McGee goes on to say that if women are to be faithful preachers, they must develop a multidisciplinary approach. They must find their authentic voices as preachers in the areas of developmental psychology, behavioral psychology, church history and spirituality. This broad based approach will help women preachers see that the challenges and, perhaps difficulties they experience as preaches are a function of something much larger than only their individual experiences. McGee states that these difficulties arise out of the nature of our culture; its understanding of power, its

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 273.

<sup>45</sup>Lee McGee, *Wrestling with the Patriarchs: Retrieving Woman's Voices in Preaching*, (Nashville, TN: Abington Press, 1996), 13.



expectations of women, and the religious legacy of the past.<sup>46</sup> McGee goes on to deal with the issues of barrier that clergy women face. She posits that the church has not heard women's voices because the church's ears were closed. Women did not hear women preachers and women preachers did not see themselves as preachers. She suggests that both factors combine to create a serious block to women's voices in the church in the past and in the present.<sup>47</sup>

Lee McGee is clear, being faithful as a woman preacher means being engaging in hearing women's voices, past and present. It means using one's voice in dialogue with God and with others. It means being engaged in a retrieval of women's voices in the past, the present and the future. In essence, it means drawing on the resources of developmental psychology, behavioral psychology, history and spirituality.<sup>48</sup>

McGee believes that preaching is God drawing us, preacher and hearer, into the event of Christ among us as the Word of God. It is the engagement of preacher and hearer with the word of God. It is the engagement of preacher and the hearer with scripture, with each other, and with the reality of the world. In this engagement of mind and soul, self and other, God speaks.

Retrieving women's voices involves more than ordaining women, giving them access to the same roles in worship that men have, and giving them equal places with men in the governance of the church. It really involves a different vision of the relationship of Christians within the church, a different ecclesiology. It involves restructuring society. And that brings with it both struggle and pain.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 15.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 33

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 19.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 37-38.

To be faithful, the woman preacher must trust God to be at work in her voice and in her sermon. Her effort to preach is loved by God. Preacher and hearer cling to the belief that in their human encounter in the preaching event, God is revealed. Therefore, she urges women to attend to their inner voice which she calls the retrieval of a woman's voice; this becomes essential at this time in the church's history because women preachers face so many challenges to their voices.

In keeping with the imperative of women retrieving their voices, Heather Murray Elkins in her book, *Worshipping Women: Re-forming God's People for Praise*, Elkins focuses our attention on the worthiness of women called of God to attend to God's business. She quotes Revelation 4:11 which is the last word on holy-human relationships and that word is *worthy*. Elkins says the time has come. The trials and tribulations of the initiation rite are over. The long awaited celebration of ordination-consecration is a hand. Every woman should vow that every sermon will bear witness to the goodness of God who creates female; every sacrament will reveal Christ who esteems us as companions of the Way; every prayer will draw its breath from the Spirit who labors to delivers us alive. Worthy, yes worthy is the cry of a new creation that is and was and is to come.<sup>50</sup>

In *God Beyond Gender: Feminist Christian God-Language*, Gail Ramshaw argues that God is gender neutral, however, she points to the rapid wave of Christian linguistic forms that seek to totally eliminate, androcentric speech from the language of worship. While she feels that this is necessary, her concern is over an appropriate way to reform God-language in the liturgy of traditional mainline congregations and denominations. By doing so, she see a gender neutral God who would truly be a God for all people. This

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<sup>50</sup>Heather Murray Elkins, *Worshipping Women: Reforming God's People For Praise*, (Nashville, TN: Abington Press, 1994), 20.

would also provide greater inroads for women called to full service in Christian ministry.<sup>51</sup>

Ramshaw raises the question of the pejorative use of feminism, even in the Christian church. She argues that her definition of feminism is meant to define and affirm the full humanity of women. She sees feminism as best being viewed on a grid on which a certain position may orient different people toward different directions. From this vantage point *maximizers and minimizers* can be used to bring clarity to feminism. Maximizers would represent the ancient tradition articulated by Aristotle and developed in the so-called separation of the sexes of the nineteenth century. Feminist maximizers value what they see as particularly feminine. Minimizers are at the opposite end of the spectrum. Minimizers without denying differences between women and men, proceed instead from an ideal of sexual equality.<sup>52</sup>

According to Ramshaw, Christian community begins with baptismal equality and calls each culture to see beyond its social limitations into the full humanity of the people of God. While this is not widely practiced by the institutional church, there are some feminist who are visibly argue an increased radical feminism and have left the church, judging it essentially and irredeemably sexist.

From reclaiming the clergy woman's voice to the worthiness of their call, is the notion of Christological feminism and womanism. According to Julie M. Hopkins in her book, *Towards A Feminist Christology*, Hopkins says with boldness, Christians are suffering from an identity crisis precisely when Europeans are faced with the outlook of a

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<sup>51</sup>Gail Ramshaw, *God Beyond Gender: Feminist Christian God-Language*, (Minneapolis. MN: Fortress Press, 1995), 2.

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*, 4

soul-less future expressed only in terms of market economic activity. She says that the European culture is facing an ideological and spiritual vacuum and the churches have no alternative vision to offer.

From this vantage point, feminist theology has emerged. Hopkins says that feminist theology is the last gasp of many thinking women in the churches to renew the faith before Christianity perishes for a lack of vision. She goes on to say that many woman clergy have walked out of their churches in frustration and anger. Others remain out of loyalty, although many are deeply unhappy with the core symbolism of Christianity.<sup>53</sup>

While the church has made great strides towards accepting women in traditional ministry roles, Hopkins contends that women and homosexuals are still restricted from full participation in Christian congregations and church leadership on the basis of their 'otherness' to Jesus the Christ. She finds a pathological obsession with security, an obsession that impels the denial of difference, an obsession that leads to a blinding Christian triumphalism. She further feels that when it comes to women and homosexuals assuming full rights and roles in the Christian church, dogmatic absolutism encourages the abuse of power because it denies the necessary openness for internal criticism and reform which a living faith requires.<sup>54</sup>

Hopkins is clear, the Bible, the Creeds, confessions of faith, the sacraments, liturgies and hymn books are aids to faith, but only to the extent that they open the possibility to disclosures of the divine. She supports her argument with the understanding

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<sup>53</sup>Julie M. Hopkins, *Towards A Feminist Christology*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 1995), 9.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 13.

that people need language to be human, to become self-conscious and to communicate and form relationships. However, she says that humans are as much a text written by culture as we are subjects of our own thoughts. She says, we cannot reach through to pure experience or reality beyond the language we have learned. Therefore, all truth is then mediated, including religious truth. She concludes her argument by saying we are thrown back upon an old Christian insight, namely that all religious language is analogical or metaphorical and that some truth is best unsaid.

From the Womanist Theological perspective, Dr. Linda E. Thomas writes about Black women's experience with God and makes a contrast with Feminine Theology in an article in Cross Current Journal entitled *Womanist Theology, Epistemology, And A New Anthropological Paradigm*. Dr. Thomas says that Womanist theology is critical reflection upon black women's place in the world that God has created and takes seriously black women's experience as human beings who are made in the image of God. She says the harmful and empowering dimensions of the institutional church, culture, and society impact the social construction of black womanhood. However, Womanist theology affirms and critiques the positive and negative attributes of the church, the African American community, and the larger society.<sup>55</sup>

One of the goals of Womanist theology is to engage in a critical conversation with black (male) theology so that a full theology for the African American community can emerge from that dialogue. Another goal of womanist theology is to unearth the ethnographic sources within the African American community in order to reconstruct

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<sup>55</sup>Linda E. Thomas, *Womanist Theology, Epistemology, And A New Anthropological Paradigm*, Cross Currents, Summer 1998, Vol. 48 Issue 4. <http://www.crosscurrents.org/thomas.htm>, (Accessed July 15, 2010).

knowledge and overcome subordination. And, finally, womanist theology seeks to decolonize the African mind and to affirm our African heritage.<sup>56</sup>

Womanist theology associates with and disassociates itself from black (male) theology and (white) feminist theology. The point of departure for black theology is white racism. Since white supremacy is a structure that denies humanity to African American people, black liberation theology examines the gospel in relationship to the situation of black people in a society that discriminates on the basis of skin color.

Thomas posits, within black theology, the exodus story is a hermeneutical device used to draw a parallel between the oppressed Israelites and the oppressed African American community. Consequently, the liberation of the Israelites represents symbolically God's freeing of black people. First generation black (male) theologians did not understand the full dimension of liberation for the special oppression of black women; this was its shortcoming. To foster the visibility of African American women in black God-talk, womanist theology has emerged.<sup>57</sup> When comparing Womanist theology to Feminist theology, Thomas says unlike black theology with its emphasis on race, feminist theology addresses the oppression of women, though primarily white women. She says, the project of feminist theology did not deal with the categories of race and economics in the development of its theological discourse. As important as the work of feminist theology has been, its shortcoming is its lack of attention to the everyday realities of African American and other women of color. It is therefore not a universal women's theology and does not speak to the issue of all women.

In arguing decisively for a womanist theology, Thomas hold in tension the

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

realities of gender verses patriarchal systems. It is Thomas belief that too often white feminist theology creates a paradigm over against men; it is an oppositional theological discourse between females and males. In contrast, womanist theology recognizes patriarchal systems as problematic for the entire black community—women, men, and children. Moreover certain feminist theological trends regard the institutional church as a patriarchal space anathema to women, thus advising women to abandon the ecclesiastical mainstream. For African American women however, the black church has been the central historical institution which has helped their families survives. Womanist theology, at the same time, would critique the black church, particularly black male pastors' inappropriate relations with black female members.<sup>58</sup>

Womanist theology concurs with black theology and feminist theology on the necessity of engaging race and gender in theological conversation. But womanist theology demands a God talk and God walk which is holistic, seeking to address the survival and liberation issues of women, men, children, workers, gays and lesbians, as these relate to local and global economies and the environment.<sup>59</sup>

Dr. Jacquelyn Grant writes on the theory of Mary Daly's, *The Context of the Christology*. Christology is define as, "the study of the person and work of Jesus Christ. The church understanding of who Jesus is and what he has done grew and developed through the centuries."<sup>60</sup>

Mary Daly' first publication was, *The Church and the Second Sex*. In it she

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

<sup>60</sup>Donald K. McKim, *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Term* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 48.

advances her argument against the church relying on Simone de Beauvoir's examination of the circumstances in her book *The Second Sex*. Dr. Grant writes, "They both attribute the oppression of women largely to religion, Christianity and the church. These institutions have conspired to make women passive and subordinate in both the church and the society. Women's passivity and subordination are kept intact by patriarchalism which characterizes both areas of life."<sup>61</sup>

The studies of humankind as it relates to Christian doctrine are concerned with the nature, origin, and destiny of humankind when defining theological anthropology. Dr.

Grant states according to Daly, theological anthropology:

...will study the dynamics of human personality and social relationship from a radically evolutionary point of view. Within this context there needs to be developed a theology of the man-woman relationship which rejects as alienating to both sexes the idea of a sexual hierarchy founded upon 'nature' and define once and for all."<sup>62</sup>

Dr. James Cones writes, "Racism is one among many problems, though perhaps the most visible, existing along with sexism, classism, and imperialism. The complexity of the world is such that elevating one of these problems to first priority does not serve to eliminate any of them. It is to be expected that persons who are victims of any injustice make their entry into the struggle for freedom at the point where it hurts them the most. But that focus should not be allowed to blind them to other manifestations of injustice as well as their interrelation with each other. Racism, classism, sexism, and imperialism are interconnected, and none can be correctly understood and eventually defeated without

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<sup>61</sup> Jacquelyn Grant, *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus: Feminist Christology and Womanist Response* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1989), 151.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 152-153.



simultaneous attention to the others. Unfortunately, blacks, women, and other victims have not always assumed the interrelations of human oppression and thus have often been enemies rather than allies".<sup>63</sup>

From the perspective of black liberation theology Dr. Cone states,

Black women forced me to face the reality of sexism in the black community. Many black women contended that their silence on sexism did not mean that it was absent in the black community, but only that they did not wish to divide black men and women in the struggle against racism. Black women's silence began to end at Union and other places, because black men misused their silence by refusing to even consider that sexism was a real problem in the black community. As I listened to black women articulate their pain, and as I observed the insensitive responses of black men, it becomes existentially clear to me that sexism was a problem too.<sup>64</sup>

Dr. Cone states,

In view of the silence of black theologians on the question of sexism, it is not surprising that the black churches seem to be unaware that a problem exists. The subordination of women in the black church is so obvious that I sometimes wonder why any argument is needed to demonstrate it. But women's subordination is taken so much for granted by men and women in the black church that it is difficult for black feminists to address the issue of sexism. When the issue is addressed to black pastors and bishops, their response is often reminiscent of the white responses to subordination of blacks. 'The women like it that way,' or 'women don't want women pastors'.<sup>65</sup>

The author believes that knowing God as the creator and liberator are keys to helping wounded clergy women rise up and succeed in a male dominated vocation. Even

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<sup>63</sup>James H. Cone, *My Soul Looks Back* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999), 115.

<sup>64</sup>*Ibid.*, 117-118.

<sup>65</sup>*Ibid.*, 122.

though situations in life arise that cause one to question God's caring, it is important for one to trust God in spite how things may appear on the surface. Women must know that God's ultimate aim is to free them from the bondage of sin (through salvation) in the form of oppression and the resulting feelings of dehumanization, rejection, shame, and degradation.

In order for women to overcome the negative results of oppression they must have a clear understanding of God as creator. The author agrees with the opinion of many theologians that the doctrine of creation is fundamental to everything that follows in Christian theology. Everything has a beginning. However, she agrees with Tillich affirming God's continuing creation of the world or sustaining creativity as opposed to deism or creation understood to be only an event of the past. "The creationist who argues that the world came into being in its present form is simply a biblical literalist who is promoting his views as better science than evolutionary theory."<sup>66</sup> God's involvement with women did not stop with creation but is an ongoing process. Wilson-Caster says, "On the cross, Jesus' last words in Matthew and Mark express pain, not simply the physical pain of torn muscles, suffocation, and the agonies of death, but also an expression of desolation, the depths of spiritual as well as physical pain. Jesus not only holds together in his person the cosmic forces of alienation and destruction, but he accepts them in his own person. He accepts his own rejection by the people he had come to redeem, and even by the Father who had sent him. Jesus came as a free expression of the divine love for the world. The perfect openness of divine love embraces human hatred and rejection. The pain which Jesus suffered was that of mockery and repudiation by

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<sup>66</sup>Owen C. Thomas and Ellen K. Wondra, *Introduction to Theology Third Edition* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2002).

those to whom he ministered to, betrayal in various guises, victimization by political, social, and religious systems which misused their rights and responsibilities, and death inflicted by those whom he loved, at the hands of those to whom he was well-disposed. His obedience unto death was not simply a passive response, but a divine acceptance of the worst the world could work, the martyrdom of a just person...” As wounded clergy women resolve in their spirits the sacrifices of Jesus, the more capable they will be to acknowledge and overcome their own rejection and suffering.<sup>67</sup>

### **Theoretical Foundations**

A lot has been said about women in ministry, much of it has done little to advance their entrance into full equality with their male counterpart. In this section, we will concentrate on how women have progressed in spite roadblocks, setbacks and outright oppression.

In an article by Ruth Armstrong entitled, *Women Pastors and the Idealization of Suffering*, Armstrong says many women entering Christian ministry are justifiably angry at the rejection, resentment and condescension they often receive and experience. To minister, as Armstrong sees it, is to identify with Jesus in the role of the suffering servant and feel the pain of the hungry. To suffer for the purpose and will of God can become for some the idealization of what Christian ministry is all about. When women pastors are marginalized and not taken serious by the Christian church it takes a strong sense of commitment not to doubt her calling.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>Ruth M. Armstrong, *Woman Pastors and the Idealization of Suffering*, SpringerLink Journal, <http://resources.metapress.com/pdf-preview.axd?code=mu4734uq76333828&size=largest>, (Accessed July 20, 2010).

According to Barbara Brown Zikmund, in an article entitled, *Women, Men and Styles of Clergy Leadership* from the Hartford Institute for Religious Research, as more and more women become pastors, the questions arises as to whether male and female clergy differ in approaches to leadership. Are female pastors leading their congregations differently? If so, how? The answers that were collected were fascinating. Both women and men think that significant differences exist between male and female clergy in this area. Many clergy believe that women clergy are more caring than men about the individual lives of members of the congregation, more pastorally sensitive, more nurturing and more likely to draw on personal experiences in preaching, teaching and counseling. The research also revealed that clergywomen are less interested than clergymen in congregational politics, power over others and job prestige. The women were considerably more likely than their male counterparts to volunteer their perception that clergywomen's leadership style is different from that typically used by clergymen.<sup>69</sup>

When asked, "Do clergywomen leaders share power more than clergymen in leadership positions?" A three-fifths majority of women clergy think women clergy do; which is an opinion not shared by most clergymen, only one-fifth of whom agree. Ordained men may have some justification in rejecting the notion that clergymen are less willing to share power than are clergywomen. A three-fifths majority of both clergywomen and clergymen see themselves as more democratic than directive in leadership style. Clergywomen, however, are slightly more likely than clergymen to assess clergywomen's leadership style as very democratic. These findings hold whether

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<sup>69</sup>Barbara Brown Zikmund, Adair T. Lummis and Patricia M. Y. Chang. *Women, Men and Styles of Clergy Leadership*, 1998 Christian Century Foundation, Vol. 115, No. 14 *Christian Century*, [http://hrr.hartsem.edu/bookshelf/clergywomen\\_summary.html](http://hrr.hartsem.edu/bookshelf/clergywomen_summary.html), (Accessed July 14, 2010).

the clergy are in parish ministry or in some other kind of work.<sup>70</sup>

It may be that whatever discrepancy exists between ordained women's and men's perceptions of whether clergywomen are more willing than clergymen to share power is present because neither clergywomen nor clergymen are basing their opinions on current observations and interactions with clergy of the opposite gender now active in ministry. More than likely, clergywomen are remembering the actions of a male senior pastor when they themselves were associates some years ago or are resenting laymen in their congregations who are giving them grief. Clergymen may also be thinking about how open and enabling they themselves are, especially when they compare themselves to some of the autocratic women in their local congregations. Opinions vary.<sup>71</sup>

Bishop Vashti M. McKenzie states in her book, *Not Without A Struggle: Leadership Development for African American Women in Ministry* that history reflects many female paradigm busters. The role of women breaking into all-male paradigms such as business, politics, sports, and religion is not a new story. Some of the women who have effectively stormed the heights of exclusionary social paradigms include Madame C.J. Walker, entrepreneur; Shirley Chisholm, presidential candidate; Mary McCloud Bethune, presidential advisor; Carol Mosely Braun, U.S. senator, Rev. Pauli Murray, first Episcopal priest; Bishop Leontyne Kelly, retired United Methodist episcopate; Lena Horne, entertainer; Oprah Winfrey, entertainment entrepreneur. But they did not achieve their accomplishments without a struggle.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>Ibid.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

<sup>72</sup>Vashti M. McKenzie, *Not Without A Struggle: Leadership Development For African American Women In Ministry* (Cleveland, OH: United Church Press, 1996), xv.

Bishop McKenzie gives very compelling and convincing statistics to support the notion that women in ministry is here to stay; but it is not happening without a struggle. She says that by 1993 the United Church of Christ had ordained approximately 1,800 women; the United Methodist Church had ordained 4,200; the Presbyterian Church 2,419; 1,000 of the 14,000 in the Episcopal Church were women, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America had 1,429 clergywomen; 1,000 of the 14,000 ministers in the Disciples of Christ were women; and in 1988, about one-third of the 19,000 ordained clergy in the African Methodist Episcopal Church were women. Bishop McKenzie says that there will be approximately 30,000 clergywomen in the United States by 1997.<sup>73</sup>

According to McKenzie's sources, the Educational Testing Service of Princeton, New Jersey, an unprecedented one-third of the 56,000 students in seminary are women. However, McKenzie cautions that more does not necessarily mean better. Just because there are more women answering the call to the gospel ministry does not make challenging the paradigm of male-dominated ministry any easier. In a study of African American female religious professionals reveals that an overwhelming majority report that they are still treated with indifference and suspicion.<sup>74</sup>

In an article entitled *Hidden Dynamics Block Women's Access to Pulpits*, Rev. Ruth Minter says that she has known clergywomen all her life even though men outnumbered women in Vermont where she grew up. Once Minter answered the call of

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<sup>73</sup>Ibid., xvi.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., xvii.

God in her life and entered seminary, she said that she did not feel terribly unusual when she decided to go to seminary and become a minister.<sup>75</sup>

Minter goes on to say that women have served as pastors in Vermont churches partly because many of those churches are small, rural and low-paying. She says as a result, many Vermont churches that are *small* by national standards have had outstanding leadership over the years -- particularly from women and from newly retired men. As a product of such a church, I hesitate to drain competent pastors away from small parishes by transforming the system.<sup>76</sup> Then she says, "Nonetheless, women ministers should have access to any pulpit for which they qualify. But churches that have always been served by men frequently do not seriously consider women ministers. This is not primarily for theological reasons, nor merely because the members of such churches are creatures of habit, nor really because they believe women to be less competent, caring or holy than men. If it were, the task would be easier." She says,

We can educate parishioners about the role of women in the Bible, and about Jesus' habit of breaking down barriers between the sexes and treating women in new ways. We can affirm that God gives gifts to all people, and declare how wonderful it is that women are finally claiming and using their God-given talents in the area of ministry. We can lift up examples of outstanding women preachers, teachers, counselors or administrators. We can make competent women visible in new roles so that people can understand existentially that these roles need not be reserved for men. We can train conference and association ministers to help local search committees understand the need to be equal-opportunity employers, and to promote the consideration of women's profiles. All of this can help, but it will not address the root problem.

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<sup>75</sup> Hidden Dynamics Block Women's Access to Pulpits <http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=1418>. (Accessed 1 October 15, 2009).

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

Minter says, the problem is not just with male attitudes or interpretations of Scripture. She affirms that we have all heard the assertion that “the women on the committee are more opposed than the men” to having a woman pastor. Although both women and men may find it difficult to accept women as their ministers, the issue is different for each sex. Both have problems that usually have been taboo topics in the polite and holy circles of our churches. It is time that they surfaced. The problems, in brief, stem from the realities of human sexuality and of the hunger for power.<sup>77</sup>

For Minter, power dynamics are played out differently for women than for men and are easily negotiated by men when women are not a part of the power equation. Minter believes that as long as men are in charge, they have little problem accepting the fact that “at least it is one of us.” However, the dynamics take an extreme turn if a woman is part of the decision-making process and are in positions of power above them. Once these dynamics are known and put in the open, Minter believes that a more objective decision regarding the qualifications of women and men can be made. The systemic concern, however, is that the prevailing psychological realities of the differences in men and women.

In the long run, however, churches will ignore a candidate’s gender only if our faith communities become substantially more involved in nurturing the whole humanity of both their women and their men. The church must nourish sources of friendship and support and expand the possibilities for developing feelings of self-esteem and self-worth for both sexes and all ages. Then, secure in the community of faith, the children of God will be able to see God’s gifts in each other and to share tasks according to those gifts,

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<sup>77</sup>Ibid.



without allowing hidden psychological needs to block their understanding of where the Holy Spirit would have them move.<sup>78</sup>

Approaching the issue of ordination and women's progress in the church from a different angle, Rev. Paula D. Nesbitt says in the article, *Women's Ordination: Problems and Possibilities* that "Over the past 25 years, I've been acutely aware that the most groundbreaking, indeed radical, feminist theology and spirituality have come from Roman Catholic women."<sup>79</sup> Nesbitt makes the point that because of the role of women in the Catholic Church has been barred from the ordination process, it has radicalized then into thinking innovatively about the issue of ordination while denominations that ordinarily ordain women have been able to co-op them.<sup>80</sup>

A significant theoretical resource for this project will be the United Methodist Manual of New Church Development and the additional resources that are in the manual. The manual will be used to train and educate Bishop Shabazz and other clergywomen in developing new faith communities and congregations. In addition to the manual, the New Church Leadership Institute will be made available for those who are interested in moving forward to pursue ordination and affiliation with New Afrikan Methodist Christian Church.

Of the sum total of the research available, history is best qualified to reward the efforts of women who answer the call to ordained ministry. Jarena Lee was born free on February 11, 1783 in Cape May, New Jersey. Mrs. Lee wrote her spiritual autobiography,

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<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>Women's Ordination Conference- Women Ordination: Problems and Possibilities, <http://www.womensordination.org/content/view/32/117/>, (Accessed October 17, 2009).

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

*The Life and Religious Experience of Jarena Lee, A Coloured Lady* in 1841. She started the black women's autobiography in America, "with an argument for women's spiritual authority that plainly challenged traditional female roles as defined in both the free and slave states, among whites as well as blacks."<sup>81</sup>

Around 1811 when she was twenty-eight, she began to feel a call to preach. She made known to then, Minister in charge of Bethel A.M.E. Church, Reverend Richard Allen of her call. He was the founder of the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church. He would later become the first Bishop of the A.M.E. church. Mrs. Lee was rejected by him. Allen told her, he would not deny her if she wanted to hold women prayer meetings or exhorting congregations after licensed male-only ministers had preached their sermons. "But as for recognizing her in some official capacity as preacher, Allen reiterated his claim that the rule of Methodism simply 'did not call for women preachers.'"<sup>82</sup>

In spite of being wounded as clergywomen by male clergy leadership, women still can succeed in their call.

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<sup>81</sup>William L. Andrews, *Sisters of the Spirit* (Bloomington, IN: University Press, 1986).

<sup>82</sup>*Ibid.*, 5.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The hypothesis for this project is that if an unfettered opportunity to serve the church as pastoral leaders were presented, more women would rise up and accept their call into ordained ministry.

One of the systemic realities of the institutional church is around issues of marginalization of women in ministry. Marginalization for our purposes means preventing someone from having attention or power. It also means to take or keep someone away from the center of attention, influence or power. Documentable evidence supports the notion that women are marginalized by men based on inconclusive interpretation of the Biblical text. Therefore, when a woman desires to be ordained and move upward into leadership status in the institutional church, male clergy leaders block their path.

Bishop Shabazz is desirous of providing a place where clergywomen who are wounded by the injustices of the institutional church can heal and be empowered to serve. A place where clergywomen can go and know they can trust the leadership, where living water is flowing freely, and a place where the love and power of God resides. A place where there are no false promises in reference to leadership opportunities and no verbal abuse from male clergy leaders. Her charge and task is the founding of a denomination of

inclusion where healing of the wounded, especially wounded clergywomen would take place and opportunities for women to serve as pastoral leaders would not be restricted.

With this goal and vision in mind, The New Afrikan Methodist Christian Church (A.M.C.C.) was birthed. This new faith community has adopted the concept of the five (5) fold ministry. The concept of the five-fold ministry comes from Ephesians 4:11. "It was God who gave some to be (1) apostles, some to be (2) prophets, some to be (3) evangelists, and some to be (4) pastors and (5) teachers."

Primarily as a result of this verse, some believe God has restored, or is restoring, the offices of apostle and prophet in the church today. Ephesians 4:12-13 tells us that the purpose of the five-fold ministry is, "to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."<sup>1</sup> Since the body of Christ still has areas of inequality and oppression, it has not attained to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

### **Defining the Problem**

An assessment of the Christian Church shows that women continue to be victimized by marginalization, sexism, and a denial of full rights to pulpit ministry. This assessment is based on both Catholic and Protestant faith systems where historically women have been denied full participation in ministry. It is based on the current and ongoing plight of clergywomen in the Catholic Church who are being denied rights and voice by men in power. The author is convinced that if women were to fully engage their

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<sup>1</sup>Eph 4:12-13.

gifts, they would make a profound difference in local church ministry as pastors and senior pastors. To help resolve this epidemic, New Afrikan Methodist Christian Church was birthed.

### **Objectives**

The writer felt that the project would be best achieved by using several methods. Pre Program and Post Program Questionnaires would be developed and disseminated to the participants addressing local church appointment, religious affiliation and clergy duties in general.

The goal of the Pre Program and Post Program Questionnaire is different from traditional models. The Pre Program Questionnaire for our purposes is to ascertain demographic data from the participants to determine areas of consistency, differentiation and where no apparent differences are detected. This demographic data is critical in assessing patterns of pain as we work to isolate some of the more common areas of pain origination.

After the Ministry Program model has been successfully completed which includes the Pre Program Questionnaires, the One-on-One Questionnaires and the Four Focus Group Presentations and Dialogue; we will have all participants complete the Post Program Questionnaire which speaks to the way the program was conducted, the level of trust established and the confidence in sharing.

One-on-One interviews will be conducted to allow clergywomen who are working in the field of full time ministry to assess they journey and to chronicle some of the struggles, pitfalls and obstacles that continue to present themselves even in the 21<sup>st</sup>

century. Some of these interviews will be conducted with clergywomen who have abandoned the institutional church and established their own independent congregations. The author is interested to determine if there was any significant change in the challenges of going rogue and establishing independent churches versus staying within the institutional setting and fighting for equal rights and access. The One-on-One interviews go to the heart of the issues that women face. It is the hope of the author for the women being interviewed to be candid about their experiences so that a model of support and alliance can be established based on mutuality and a common goal of fully serving God in spirit and in truth for all women called into ministry.

The focus group sessions are designed to work with women from the pew in an attempt to educate laity on the call of God in the lives of all people. Essentially, this section consist of working with the scripture in an attempt to empower laity women to support, encourage and dispel myths and negative rumors about clergywomen and their call to serve as pastors and senior pastors in all size congregations.

The author is convinced that when women from the pew are aware of how God uses women to preach God's gospel, it will bring about a wellspring of possibility and freshness to the ministry. Currently, women continue to be the primary group of worshippers among churchgoers with women average worship attendance being 61 percent and men average 39 percent according to George Barna Research.<sup>2</sup>

Scripture text and biblical scholarship will enable the author to inform members on the necessity of sound biblical exegesis.

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<sup>2</sup>Church For Men, <http://churchformen.com/allmen.php> (accessed on February 10, 2010).

### **Measurement**

The measurement used to assess the project was both quantitative and qualitative. The comparison of the Pre Test and Post Test detailed the percentages of the responses. The individual One-on-Ones interviews used a qualitative approach and the Focus Group Questions used the qualitative approach.

### **Participants**

The nature of the project was the assessment of clergywomen and their experiences with various injustices toward full rights as ordained clergypersons. In order to provide impartial results, several clergypersons were used from around the area. Each of these clergy women were either pasturing a congregation with full rights as a result of abandoning the institutional church and establishing independent congregations, clergywomen who have been able to rise up the institutional church ladder of success with full clergy rights and women in institutional setting who are still trying to climb up the rough side of the mountain with little or no success.

Lay women were also used in this project to empower the local church to accept, embrace and affirm clergywomen as they accept God's call on their lives. The author acknowledges that it would have been good to use lay men in this project as well, however, because of the emphasis on wounded clergy women, the author elected to leave the voice of men out of this phase of an ongoing ministry project.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **FIELD EXPERIENCE**

#### **Pre Test Questionnaire**

In this section, we will analyze the results of the Ministry Program data and seek to draw some conclusions regarding our findings.

The Pre Program Questionnaire was given at the beginning of the ministry program and consisted of 10 questions that we examine with 10 persons participating.

- 1) Do you have a church appointment?  
10 persons responded to this question and of the 10 persons, who responded, 70 percent were under appointment and 30percent were not.
- 2) Have you been hurt or disappointed by a faith institution?  
Of the 10 persons responding to this question, 100 percent stated that they have been hurt by a faith institution.
- 3) How long have you been in the process of ordination?  
Of the 10 persons responding to this question, 20 percent said 1-3 years; 60 percent said 4-7 years; and 20 percent said 8-10 years.
- 4) Do you have any religious affiliations? If so what are they?  
Of the 10 persons responding to this question, 50 percent were Methodist; 30 percent were Baptist and 10 percent were Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (PAW) and 10 percent were Full Gospel Nondenominational.
- 5) Are you currently called to be a pastor?  
Of the persons responding to this question, 100 percent were called to be a pastor.
- 6) How often are you given an opportunity to lead, i.e., Bible Study, Sunday Class, worship?



Of the persons responding to this question, 30 percent said every week; 40 percent said once a month; 20 percent said twice a month and 10 percent said whenever time permits.

7) Are you ordained?

Of the persons responding to this question 80 percent said yes and 20 percent said no.

8) How often are you put under title Evangelist, Speaker or lecture?

Of the persons responding to this question, 20 percent said never; 40 percent said often and 40 percent said frequently.

9) What is your current connection to a faith institution?

Of the persons responding to this question, 40 percent said no connection; 10 percent said somewhat connected and 50 percent said well connected.

10) Does your denomination support women leadership?

Of the persons responding to this question, 20 percent said not at all; 20 percent said somewhat supportive and 60 percent said extremely supportive.

The Pre Program results indicate a mature group of clergy women participatory in this ministry program. An overwhelming number of them are currently under appointment and the other women were not currently serving as a pastor under appointment. This indicates that women in ministry are able to be appointed in large numbers even if they are not able to fully participate in the process of ministry.

There were three religious denominations represented in this ministry program; Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (PAW), Various Methodist affiliations and Baptist. The various Methodist affiliations had the largest representation with PAW and Baptist equally represented. This indicates strong support among Methodist for women in ministry and a growing number of women entering the PAW and Baptist denominations.

All of the clergywomen were ordained, which is an indication of their commitment to serving God in fulltime ministry. It was not a question of inquiry for this

ministry program, but it was interesting to note that all of the clergywomen represented in this ministry project were seminary trained graduates. Even though all clergywomen are ordained, seminary trained and over 70 percent of them are currently under appointment, 80 percent of the time these women are referred to as being other than the ordained pastor God called them to be. This is a critical factor in understanding why clergywomen are often wounded as they walk in their call. When laity and other clergy refuse to acknowledge ordained clergywomen as equal to ordained clergymen, the door is opened whether knowingly or unknowingly for abuse in various forms to occur.

### **One-on One Interview**

Not unusual in research design and implementation is that not all field work will yield the results you anticipate. This has been the case with the One-on-One interviews (Appendix B). Although a sufficient number of persons participated in the overall ministry project, we only had two persons who were willing to participate in the interview process. The process of one-on-one interviews is designed to extrapolate meaningful data from an individual in an effort to delve deeper into their life's work and to seek to understand the basis for their actions.

The participants who completed this section of the ministry program were from the Full Gospel Non Denominational Church and the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World. What was interesting about both of these individuals was that they both left the institutional church and started new congregations. Both congregations have been in existence for a significant number of years and both congregations are relatively healthy and vibrant according to New Church and Redeveloping Church standards.

The one-on-one interview sought to ascertain the pastor's call to ministry, those persons who influenced them along their journey, obstacles to becoming full charge pastors, the pain of their journey and the joy of reflecting on how God has brought them thus far along the way. Interesting to each pastor's testimony was the divergent ways that God too little and made much because of those who were not perfect by faithful to the task of God's call on their life. Both pastor's identified critical and defining moments in their journey and both admit that while they are actively engaged in fulltime ministry; the struggles, challenges and opportunities for the hand of God to move, guide and direct their ministry continues on a daily basis.

### **Focus Group Session One**

The focus group sessions (Appendix C) were prepared on the order of spiritual formation sessions or covenant Bible Studies where the participants were consistent and developed a level of trust with one another, enabling them to engage the subject material, one another and the author, who served as the group's moderator. The first session was based on John 4:13 and the subject or topic to be discussed and explored was, *Wounded Clergy Women Walking in their Call with Pain*.

In this session, it was important for the participants to be able to discern the difference in constructive and destructive pain and how God moves even in painful situations to transform, deliver and empower. John 4:13 is the familiar story of Jesus meeting a Samaritan woman at a well in the heat of the day. Even though the Samaritan woman went to the well at the heat of the day, which was not only unusual but a clever

way of avoiding or suppressing the pain of her actions; she could not eliminate the pain of her choices that other women made a practice of reminding her about them on a daily basis.

The group concentrated a fair amount of time dealing with the Samaritan woman dropping the watering pot upon her heart being changed and filled with God's forgiveness and grace. The participants were challenged to identify times in their lives when they had to live with and walk with pain of their choices. They were then asked to determine the difference between the pain of right choices versus the pain of incorrect choices and how each form of pain brings about a different level of response and quality of life. They were then asked to consider clergywomen who dared to answer the call of God on their lives and willfully be as sheep led to the slaughter in an effort to be faithful to God's will concerning them. What seemed to be an uneventful lesson about a very familiar story became a profound opportunity for lay women to put themselves in the place of clergywomen who would do anything for the Lord; the source of living water for our lives.

### **Focus Group Session Two**

This session was based on Luke 13:10-13, and used as a subject or theme, *Facing Myself: Waiting in Labor in the Institutional Church*. In this particular session, the participants were challenged to face themselves in ways that maybe very uncomfortable (Appendix C). In this particular text from the gospel of Luke 13, we find the story of the woman who was bent over for 18 years. The position of being bent over is a subordinate position; it is a position of weakness and a position of powerlessness.

The participants were asked to ponder in their hearts the meaning and significance of those things that are institutional in our current society that relegate women to being bent over. They were asked to consider the number of subordinate and demeaning conditions that women are required and relegated to do because of the privilege and entitlement of a patriarchal system that has self perpetuated itself for far too long. They were then asked to put themselves in the position of women called by God to serve as pastors with full rights of ministry. It was interesting to note that when people are asked to contextualize circumstances and conditions in life prior to taking action or reacting, a profound difference was the result and a noticeable difference occurred in the dialogue after the issue at hand was contextualized and given relevance in their own lives.

### **Focus Group Session Three**

This session was based on the Old Testament book of 1 Samuel 1:4 and used a subject or title of *Dealing with My Predicaments* and focused generally on the words that hurt rather than words that heal (Appendix C). In this particular passage, the participants were asked to envision the possibility of living their lives in a place where they were constantly being tormented by someone who had something that you could not have.

While the lesson according to the text dealt with the ability to birth a child, the lesson could apply to the dichotomy of rich versus poor, the haves versus the have not's, those who have insurance and those who do not and those who are privileged and those who are not. When this lesson was viewed from the vantage point of privilege, hurt and pain becomes more acute. Our lesson focused on the degree and the methodical nature of those who thrive on putting others down just because they can with words that bring damage and scarring long after the words have been forgotten.

The participants were asked to explore what it means to have victory, triumph and good success in the midst of unlikely odds. Clergywomen are often victims of verbal abuse at the hands of lay and clergy men, lay women and young people who do not understand the meaning of Call in relationship to God. Clergywomen are victims like Hannah in having desires that seem to never come. In working through this text, the participants were asked to ponder in their hearts, what it means to yearn for God's will to be done, what it means for God to intercede and what it means to hold on to God unchanging hand in uncertain times, circumstances and situations.

#### **Focus Group Session Four**

This was the final session in a series of four under the general heading *Wounded Clergy Women Walking in their Calling* (Appendix C). This particular session used the book of Proverbs 31 and a subject or topic *Advancing to Be My Best Me, Beautiful Me at Last*. Because this was the last session, it was important for the group to find success not only in scripture for the level of ongoing abuse in the world, but the ongoing abuse against others out of a sense of entitlement and privilege. This particular session evoked significant dialogue and discourse on the issue of virtue and what does virtue look like today.

For some, virtue is akin to traditional worship; a fading art form. The text rightfully asks the question of years gone by that is very much applicable on today; *Who can find a virtuous woman...* In this particular session time was given to the evolution of the church and how some of the staples of the faith are being slowly replaced by methodologies that make it difficult for new comers to stick and stay. Passion and

heartfelt reflection was provided by those who have watched a day of Sabbath rest erode into a highly competitive day of work, recreation, shopping and worship.

Alternatively, this text illuminates the reality of progress which is often slow to take place and very stressful of those who brave this task as a first attempt. Virtuousness according to the text is a rare commodity and should be savored and treasured. It is very difficult to savor and treasure very much of value when we live in a disposable and throwaway society where almost everything is expendable.

From these four focus group sessions it is abundantly clear that God has destined women to be equal to men in the area of pulpit ministry. The challenge of clergywomen as we move deeper in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is to form alliances with one another and continue to provide advocacy, refuge and a safe haven for clergywomen and men who have been damaged by a system that is afraid of change and a system that knows no other way to survive.

Collaboration is critical for clergywomen at this time in salvation history. As the nation begins to rethink church and rethink how to attract and maintain new converts to the faith; nurture and affirmation are going to be two critical components in moving God's agenda forward. God's agenda is still that all people might be saved; that all people have the opportunity to see God face to face, as God really is and to bask in God's glory.

As more and more clergywomen come together to tell their story of how God has brought them through, their testimony will serve as grist for the mill as they assume their rightful place and rightful role of full ministry rights in the body of Christ. Ordination is

not sufficient; ordination must come with the power to act decisively against the wiles of the devil in order for the kingdom of God to be present with us.

### **Post Program Questionnaire**

The Post Survey Questionnaire was in the form of two significant questions. The first question wanted to know how the sessions dealt with wounded-ness, hurt, rejection, hope, rising, and succeeding as a clergywoman answering the call of God in their life. All participants responding to this question affirmed the experience and acknowledge the level of assurance, confidence and trust in what God was doing in their lives and in the lives of other clergywomen in America.

The sessions were quite helpful in allowing clergywomen and victims of clergy abuse have a place to come heal and recommend themselves to the calling of God on their lives. It served as a source of spiritual renewal and a source of spiritual revitalization.

The second question wanted to know if the types of settings helped the participants become more open in their situation, in their ministry work and in moving forward to where God wants them to be? The responses to this question generally seem to affirm that the setting was most fitting for building trust, feeling safe and nurtured and inspired them to open up and engage the material and one another. It was also stated that the process created anticipation for the next session. After the final session, participants began to speculate on what would be the next steps even if the next steps were beyond the scope of this ministry project.



## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **REFLECTION, SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

As previously stated, womanist and feminist from every corner of the world are determined to stop walking away from their calling from God angry and hurt. They have formed a coalition born out of their intrinsic ability to love, nurture and bare pain. They have formed alliances, hosted workshops and seminars and began writing about an issue that has been keep silent for far too long. Clergy women have decided that “the rocks do not have to cry out for them” any longer; that they are going to walk in their calling, speak truth to power, educate and empower women who dare to accept God’s call and emerge as a significant answer to the ongoing religious and spiritual impotence that continue to plague our country and our world.<sup>1</sup>

This project was born and birthed out of the author’s pain. She has labored with the shame, guilt and sense of worthlessness at the hands of man and an institutional system that convinced her that she needed man and man’s system to survive. The process of self-directed learning has assisted her to be able to critically reflect and analytically focus on the root causation of her pain instead of allowing a system which is designed to self perpetuate and survive to dominate her mind, soul and heart. Through self-directed learning she has discovered a larger system than the system that was seeking to capture

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<sup>1</sup>Angela D. Washington, “When The Rocks Stop Crying” (Sermon, Floyd Chapel Baptist Church, Stockbridge, GA, October 8, 2008).

and contain her spirit. She has discovered that she, like so many women, both feminist and womanist who have gone before her and those who shall come behind her are a profound and significant instrument in God's salvific plan of life and life eternal. She has galvanized the internal strength from her soul and concretized the yearning deep down in the bowels of her spirit; she shall no longer allow man or man's system to dominate what God has destined to emerge from her life. She has found renewed possibility and favor in the love of God through holding in tension the world as it is and the world as it should be. Now she is ready to mobilize a denomination of women and men who will no longer shrink under the systemic demands of a system that does not have God as its primary subject and objective.

Bishop Shabazz remembers vividly the day she entered this D.Min. Program. She was hurt, full of tears and did not know what to do or where to turn. She had dotted every eye and crossed every tee and yet, she was overlooked as a candidate for a pastoral appointment for political favors from the *Old Boys Network*. Bishop Shabazz remembers having to bring her husband along for comfort and support for in her mind and in her world, support was nowhere else to be found.

Quickly God moved and provided her with a colleague and a mentor who made it a priority for her to be protected and find the refuge she needed to heal. Later another mentor would be added to her team of invested colleagues for no other reason but the love of God and living a life of humility and grace. Within a few months more colleagues were added to her circle and she began to see a systemic system of clergy pain induced and regulated by a system that clergy should have been able to trust.

As each passing day, Bishop Shabazz exchanged anger for possibility as her colleagues began to share their story and their pain and their journey toward being faithful to Almighty God. As a few months became a year, a fragile pastor returned to the United Theological Seminary campus, shoulders back, confidence high and walking in the essence of her calling of pastor, Bishop and founder of a new and dynamic denomination determined to provide opportunities for wounded pastors to heal, gain strength and reemerge as a force to reckon with in a world that seems to have lost its moral, theological and ethical compass many years prior.

As Bishop Shabazz began to matriculate through the first and second phase of her course work, she began to gain clarity and urgency toward a ministry project that would allow clergypersons with specific emphasis on clergywomen to come and be refreshed. She was compelled by the urging of the Holy Spirit to discern a call for protestant pastoral nurture the likes of modern society has never witnessed. As she began to conduct her biblical, theological, historical and theoretical foundations, she was intrigued by the number of women in the feminist movement and the women in the womanist movement who had been waging war on an antiquated patriarchal system that was in desperate need of upgrading and revitalization.

Bishop Shabazz was fascinated by the amount of work that was done toward linguistics and gender neutral language that many of the seminaries, colleagues and universities began to use as requisite for making a passing grade. Bishop Shabazz was encouraged at the feedback and critique she received without condemnation from colleagues and mentors who cared more about her personhood and scholarship than they did about allowing her to use the pressures of life to give her reason to give up and quit.

It finally happened; she met with her Candidacy Review committee and after reviewing her document and explaining in great detail the basis of her problem and the action she planned to us to perform problem solving, she was able to proceed with the implementation phase of her final project.

As with many advanced degree programs, a large part of earning the degree is the ability to perceive when stormy seas arise and there seems to be nothing to hold your life steady. However, with the aid of her cohort group and two concerned mentors, she held on.

Her project model was a model that was designed to allow wounded and abused clergywomen to come together for truth-telling, healing and bonding. It was designed to allow clergywomen to share their story with one another to provide strength for one another's journey. Her model was unique in that it was not so much about testing knowledge, awareness and know how, rather, her model was about capturing the essence of a pastor's pain by capturing the essence of a wounded pastor's heart.

Throughout her process, the Bishop was well aware of her own sense of dissatisfaction, however, as each participant continued to press their way through the material, Bishop Shabazz continued to be restored as well. This was one of those projects that provided immediate replicability because it was dealing with prior, immediate and future pain of persons called of God to be as sheep led to the slaughter in an effort that all might be saved.

As the ministry project proceeded, Bishop Shabazz became aware of several findings. First, she was immediately made aware that one of the most important aspects of her project going forward is to provide a form of social networking for pastors who

have been wounded institutionally or congregationally. Social networking is the way that pastors move from fear and abuse to covenant groups, healing and restoration. Bishop Shabazz realized that when people are familiar with one another or have some common point of reference other than their individual pain, healing can take place through the process of repentance, acceptance, grace, forgiveness and love. The process of healing should never be taken lightly nor should clergy every have to suffer in silence in an effort to be super pastors.

The second finding that was made available to Bishop Shabazz was that although there are several feminist and womanist groups located through America, connecting hurting pastors to them can sometimes be difficult because many of the national groups exist as membership organizations and not for the sake of pastoral wellbeing and pastoral self-care.

The third finding of Bishop Shabazz was that isolation was real and many pastors both male and female suffer in silence because they are in denial of their need to be connected to other people. There has to be a way to form support groups that ward off reprisal, clergy burnout and a sense of helplessness when the demands of any one ministry location is more than any one pastor can bear at that time.

Finally, this project demonstrated in a very real way that there are immediate success stories of those who are able to find a safe sanctuary and release the cares of their ministry in the arms of caring and loving colleagues who will give them the space and support to heal and renew their spirits for ministry.

**APPENDIX A**  
**PRE-SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE**

## **PRE-SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **WOUNDED CLERGY WOMEN: WALKING IN THEIR CALL AS CLERGY LEADERS AND SUCCEEDING**

#### **SECTION I:**

1. Do you have a church appointment?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

2. Have you been hurt or disappointed by a faith imitation?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

1. How long have you been in the process for ordination?

- ☐ 1-3 years
- ☐ 4-7 years
- ☐ 8-10 years
- ☐ Longer than 10 years
- ☐ Other Reasons: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **SECTION II:**

2. Do you have any religious affiliations? If so what are they?

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3. Are you currently called to be a pastor

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, what church do you currently attend and have you share that calling with the leadership/pastors/elders?

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If no, is there a specific reason why you have not?

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4. How often are you given an opportunity to lead, i.e., Bible Study, Sunday Class, worship?
  - ☐ Every week
  - ☐ Once a month
  - ☐ Twice a month
  - ☐ Whenever time permits
5. Are you ordained
  - ☐ Yes
  - ☐ No
6. How often are you put under the title Evangelist, Speaker or lecture?
  - ☐ Never
  - ☐ Sometimes
  - ☐ Often
  - ☐ Frequently
7. What is your current connection to a faith institution?
  - ☐ No connection
  - ☐ Somewhat connected
  - ☐ Well connected
8. Does your denomination support women leadership?
  - ☐ Not at all
  - ☐ Somewhat
  - ☐ Extremely



**APPENDIX B**  
**CLERGYWOMEN INTERVIEWS**

## **Interview 1**

**June 3, 2010**

**Rev. Dr. D. T.**

**Question 1:** What called you to the ministry?

**Answer 1:** I believe before the foundations of the world I was ordained by God, that He would call me in my generation, in my time, and in my season to the ministry. So I know that the Lord Himself called me into the ministry and the what in the question would be my passion, my faith and my conviction in the things of God. I was first of all raised in the church so I would say that my upbringing would be my what that called me to the ministry.

**Question 1B:** What and who were the influences of your journey in the beginning?

**Answer 1B:** The who of my influences was my grandmother. We referred to her as Mother because she was the mother of the church, Mother A. M. She raised me from a year and five months old when my biological mother ceased. Through my grandmother, one of my aunts who was my father's sister, raised me as well. They were women of God and very strong in faith. They were walkers in ministry, prayer warriors. They lived a life of fasting and prayer so this is what I saw as I grew up. I saw their passion and their Godly walk in ministry and I was strongly influenced to follow the pattern.

**Question 2:** Was there a particular church denomination or independent church home? Where did you start?

Answer 2: I started in what was known and is even now known as the Pentecostal church. I was reared in the Pentecostal church.

Question 3: In your younger years did you feel the Call or know you had a call on your life in a Pentecostal church that you would one day lead you to become a Pastor/Founder?

Answer 3: Never, absolutely not. I didn't feel that influence because I grew up in a males dominated organization where I did not see from the pulpit or the podium stand women herolling the word of God but I did receive that influence from my grandmothers living room or from Sunday School maybe. But to think that one day I myself as a woman would stand at the podium or the sacred desk, I did not receive the influence. I did not feel that flame in my upbringing at all.

Question 4: Tell me when did it take place?

Answer 4: Actually it took place back in the year 1984. My husband was transferred; he worked for a company and was transferred to G. South Carolina. I visited a church by the name of Today's Faith. The Pastor was Pastor E. M. S., a female. I heard her voice on the radio, mind you all my life I've been under male leadership but she had a radio broadcast and when I heard her voice something leaped in my spirit and I found that church. When I found it I joined it the first day and this is where my experience started.

Question 5: Is everything now in ministry what you thought it was going to be when you first started?

Answer 5: No, not at all. When I first started, you have such zeal. The zeal is so strong you see all of the glimmer from maybe having looked on other leaders and maybe not have spoken to them about what they may have experienced in there beginnings and through there mean times in ministry. I kind of came into ministry feeling like oh woo. You're going to just start this church and people are going to come and really love the Lord like you do. But then you find that's not

always the case and there is some things about ministry that's not just going to happen, you're going to have to work for it. The labor can be hard labor.

Question 6: From G. South Carolina to where we are now here in Savannah, there was a journey that took place in between those times. What happened between those two points?

Answer 6: In between G. South Carolina and Savannah my husband was transferred to another city in Georgia and I worked with a banking institution and a young man came into the bank one day and invited me to his church. The name of the church was and still in E. F. Missionary Baptist Church. It was under the leadership of a Rev. Dr. R. L.W., a female. I love a female. He said you must come and I said well sure. We had just moved into this city and certainly I needed leadership. When I went to E. F. Missionary Baptist Church and heard the voice of Rev. Dr. R. L.W. who is not Bishop I knew I was home. The Lord allowed her to nurturer from her heart the deeper spiritual things to me between G. South Carolina and Savannah. So this other city was my mid-stop.

Question 7: Then leaving there, the other city, did you feel your zeal of opening your ministry or did you move and come under someone else?

Answer 7: I was coming into Savannah, GA. with a prophetic word on my life from Dr. Bishop R. that the Lord would take me into the city and I would become a Pastor in the city of Savannah. I received the prophecy, came into the city of Savannah not trying to come and open up doors of a church at that time at all. But having gone around the city and visited several churches in Savannah. I knew in the back of my mind that I was going to be using my prophecy and that it would come to pass. So therefore I did not join a ministry in Savannah because I knew the prophecy that had been given.

Question 8: In your journey was there pain that you felt as you moved from the seat of learning into the seat of teaching, Pastor Overseer, Founder?

Answer 8: Yes. Prior to moving to G. South Carolina my husband's job was used by the Lord to channel me around into the areas that I need to be in prior to me becoming a Pastor so we went to M., GA. My upbringing was under strong male leadership, the Bishops, the Pastors, everyone except the missionaries. They were all male. In Ma., GA I went to a church in the Pentecostal church denomination under the leadership of a male Bishop. Relatively in my experience it was understood to me that women were never ordained or placed in the position of Pastorate in that organization. In that organization it was understood that you were not qualified and the word of the Lord did not give that window of space for you to become a Pastor. When I came into the Pastorate the pain of that knowledge, knowing that I would not qualify there brought me into what might be known as a lonely place. Loneliness by itself is pain. In that lonely place I began to feel..... I loved my Bishop there he was very approachable and is now deceased, but I met him here in Savannah. I was so happy to let him know that I had purchased the church and I was now a Pastor. He was very warm in his response to me and he said to me, "Come talk to me" and laughed. I said to him, "Bishop you know I know ya'll do put women up as Pastors" and we laughed it off. However, deep down within I would have loved to have gone to my Bishop and share the victories. I loved him as a Bishop and just maybe I was the one that would be nurtured in his hands and not other hands because I loved him that way, so that was pain for me. I knew that I would never have his involvement as I would desire it. Then I went through the pain of much rejection back when the Berlin Wall was being torn down. On that day which was a Sunday, I was invited to a Baptist church to minister in South Carolina. I had never been to that church before and it was 104 years old so when I got there I noticed that the Pastor, the two deacons, and the young lady that invited me went into a meeting

in the back. She came out and asked me did I come to give a speech or did I come to preach. I said I came to preach, that's what you invited me to do. I realized then from her words and her expression that the Pastor did not want me in the pulpit. That was pain because I felt as since of rejection of whom God made me and who God had made me to be. They made a decision to allow me to come and grace the sacred desk of their sanctuary. For the first time in the history of that church had a woman stood in that pulpit, 104 years, and God allowed me to do it. I must say I did not know that I was the first woman to ever grace that pulpit in the 104 years until after I had preached the Word. The preacher got up and said, "I know that the Reverend somebody that was buried out in the grave yard beside the church is turning over in his grave because for the first time in this church in 104 years has a woman been allowed to stand in this pulpit" and I thought I was going to flip over. But God used me to break down this wall and it was the same Sunday that the Berlin Wall came down. Lord has mercy, victory in the mist of pain. {Can I use that, said Bishop Shabazz? Yes, because I did not say the name of that church.} A whole century plus four years before a woman was able to come into that pulpit and preached.

Question 9: What would you tell a young woman who has the desire to do what God has told her to do? To go and start a church, to go and preach the word of God, from your experiences what would you tell that young woman?

Answer 9: I would tell that young woman, first of all to never rebel through the pain. Never rebel because what God has ordained for her life, it is so. The only person in this world that can change the destiny that God has set for her is her, no one else. So what this young lady would need to do is lay aside all opinions and go forth in the spirit of humility and do the work of ministry. That would be my words to her. Walking humbly, that's the only way to walk.

Question 10: You mentioned G. South Carolina, the other city in Georgia, M. Georgia, and Savannah as your ministry order. Is that the order?

Answer 10: It is M. Georgia, G. South Carolina, the other city in Georgia, and Savannah.

Question 11: Do you believe,....Because I am sitting in the sanctuary, and it is absolutely real. It is absolutely a success. (Pause) I've asked all of the questions but I'm just not finished. I want to know some more. Because you are an example here in this city and probably a national figure and role model that can be placed on a pedestal. I know that you don't want to be but because of what I see and what I have experienced in knowing you, that's a place for you. I'm so glad it is just a tape for me. I'm having a moment here right now. I knew that God was going to do something and that it was going to be a journey for me. I did not want to do it but God said you have to go and get this Doctorate degree. I when I accepted it and I did not rebel. The Lord spoke and said, "I am going to take you into different places, different experiences, and this is going to be an experience". This is one of the experiences that I do believe God was talking about and sitting in the presence of royalty and of knowledge here in your church. You are, through my experiences knowing you, a woman who has gone through a knowledge base of getting to where you are, tell me about that.

What is your educational background?

Answer 11: Well, of course I'm a wolverine girl. I graduated high school from Tompkins High right here in Savannah, GA. Tompkins wolverines, oh you never detach from that you know? As we traveled around I attended M. College in M., GA. That's where I started getting some of my academic studies behind me and went on from there. My husband moved so we moved along with him of course and I attended G. M. College in the other city in Georgia. Then from there came back to Savannah and during that time I was raising three girls

as well. So I was raising my daughters and then I enrolled in Covington Theological Seminary. There I received my Bachelor's, my Master's, and my Doctorate. They accepted all of my credits and classes. I also attended St. Leo University. I kind of studied around here and there but Covington accepted all of my credits so I went ahead and finished everything with them.

Bishop: Rev. Dr. D. T. we are going to wind down and I want to thank you for your time.

Question 12: Tell me a little bit more in your success as a founder and Pastor of your church. When you first opened the doors of the church who was there?

Answer 12: When we first opened the doors actually the ministry began in my family room at home. Back in 1994, my husband, myself, and my two daughters. My oldest daughter was living at College. From the family room the Lord spoke to my heart and I went down to the R. Inn Hotel down at the foot of the bridge, it's now the Savannah Art College. We would go there every Sunday at 12noon for service. They allowed us to come into their banquet room and have a one day service each week on Sunday. While we were there for about a year and a half the Lord spoke to my heart and said, "I don't want you to open doors here just have service. You come in, have service, and you walk faithful". So I would go there with myself, my husband, and my two daughters, my sister-in-law, my niece, and my nephew. They were little babies. We would go there and we did that for maybe 16 months. After the 16 months I was in the hospital in Augusta. I had a thyroid surgery and I was there and my baby girl called. She said, "Mamma, there is a church for sale". I said, "Really, if you'll hold the paper for me then I will look at when I get home". Sure enough I did and it was this church. We had no members Bishop, but the Lord spoke to me and showed me in a vision this was my church. This was the land that he wanted to give to me for ministry. Giving you the whole story, we did not know where we would get money from but



the Lord spoke to my heart and said, "You start tithing to an account". Then I, my daughter, and my husband started putting our tithes in an account faithfully, certainly not for this building because it would be impossible. I still didn't know where we were going to get the money. Let me be honest with you. Many Pastors had looked at this building over the years but this building was in ruins and they could not see what it was going to come out to be because it was in ruins. When I walked in, I knew this is what God had for me and so my husband, in the mist of all of it, was in a car accident. That's why the Bible says, "All things worked together for the good of those who love the Lord and are called according to His purpose". The insurance settlement from the accident, they didn't want to pay us and they accused him of some of every kind of things but God was in the background. They would not send the check but God gave me a vision and I saw the check on my closet door one morning for the exact amount to the penny that the insurance company would one day send. When they said they were not going to pay us I began to fast and pray. I never go to the mail box Bishop, my husband always gets the mail, but one day I was standing in my kitchen and the Holy Spirit said go to the mail box. I went to the mail box and in the mail box was the check. It was \$15,000.00. The Lord had shown me the check on the closet door for \$15,000.00 and they said they were not going to send us the check. So that was the money for the down payment on this building. That's where we came from but when we opened the doors and we cut the ribbon we purchased the building with no members. This is why I would tell that young lady when you know God has called you, just walk humbly and go forth because He will take care of everything for you. He will go before you and make all the crocket places straight and open every door that the enemy has tried to shut. God will open that door. We moved into this building with me, my husband, my three daughters, my sister-in-law, and her two babies. We had no members but the grounds were full of people because my Bishop from G. South Carolina brought two bus loads. We paraded from the foot of

the bridge over here but there were those that were on the on the grounds that had not been invited and heard about it and they are members here now. God is good. They are members here right now. They were standing on the grounds when we cut the ribbon. They came in, joined the church, and they are here right now and that's been about 14 years ago. That to me..... God will prove Himself faithful. He will prove Himself faithful.

Bishop: Rev. Dr. D.T. that is the end of this interview.

Rev.Dr. D.T.: Can I give you one more thing and you can use it if you want to? In five years of us purchasing this building, we burnt the mortgage. The mortgage on this building was burnt five years after purchase. I give Him Glory. Thank you, Jesus. To God be the glory, and we purchased the land across the street.





## **Interview 2**

**June 12, 2010**

**Rev. Dr. Y.**

Question 1: What called you to the ministry?

Answer 1: The Lord Jesus Christ called me into the ministry.

Question 1B: Were there any influences or any mothers, grandmothers and grandfathers that influenced you in the beginning when you knew that God called you into the ministry, going way back into your History?

Answer 1B: Well there was a lady that had invited me to a church and she asked me did I want to be saved. She came and picked me up, carried me to church and that particular night evidently my heart must have been right the Lord Himself filled me with the Holy Spirit. I was baptized and from that day forward I've been serving the Lord.

Question 2: Was this in your adolescence or in your teenage years? In what age range?

Answer 2: I was 14 years old when I gave my life to Christ.

Question 3: Were you apart of a church denomination or a non-denominational church, or any other type of church before you started on your journey in ministry?

Answer 3: Yes, I was affiliated with a Baptist denomination church.

Question 4: Were there any obstacles you faced in that church?

Answer 4: Well at my age I did not really face any obstacles because I was a child and as Paul says when I was a child I think as a child and when I became a man or grown I put away childish things. Now unfortunately, my mother passed when I was very young and I came to live with my brother and his wife. There was a young lady that was a friend of mine and her mother was a missionary and her mother was the one that invited me to church. That's how this lady got into my life and introduced me to Christ.

Question 5: Did you feel the call on your life in that church would lead you to be a Pastor/Founder?

Answer 5: It's ironic you asked me that because at the age of 15 I knew that the Lord had a call on my life. Now, I gave Him my life at the age of 14 and at the age 15 I knew that He had a call on my life because of the revelation of the word that He would reveal to me as I'm studying the word of God and His anointing that rested up on me. I was a praise leader. I just worshiped the Lord and my intent was like I just loved the Lord because of what He did for me. It just changed my life around and that experience at the age of 14, I had never had that experience before. And at the age of 15 you might as well say that I had sold out to God and at 15 years old I knew that He had a call on my life but not to the extent of knowing I was going to be a Pastor. I knew He had something for me to do because I liked to sing. Then He called me to be a Missionary. Then He changed it to Evangelist and I just wanted to be a helper to the pastor. For this end, no I did not see that right then but I wanted to do everything that I could do for Kingdom work.

Question 6: Tell me or give me a chronological timeline of events that took place with you from the time that you knew that you were called at the age of 15?

Answer 6: I could tell there was a calling on my life at the age of 15 but it did not come to a fruition of my evangelism work until 1972. I

probably was about 20 years old and I started evangelizing. From the period of time 1972 to 1981 I evangelized all over the country locally, state, and national. By the way I am affiliated with Pentecostal Assemblies of the World. From 1972 to 1981 I evangelized. I was the state evangelist. I worked on quite a few organizations in the PAW. I was the constitution and chair person for the young people. I worked as the youth leader for the state and worked in the missionary department, with the women, and with the nurse's gill. So there are a lot of activities and experiences that I've had into the body of the organization before I started pasturing and there were times when I would go do revivals and after we would go talk to people. When I was trained I was taught never talk to members about their Pastors except whatever comes up at revival. There would be times where after the message people would want to come up and talk to me after service with all of the excuses of we're not doing this and we are not doing that. I would just sit and listen and let them spill. Once they get through spilling I would ask them have you shared this with your leader and they would say oh yes. Then I would say OK well what did your leader say and they would tell me the spill. I would tell them if you're not going to be under the particular leadership of that pastor church then you need to move to some other place where you would like to be under because when you are under leadership you have to follow the leadership whether you like it or not. As long as you are in that house you have to abide by their rules and that did not come off so good with some of them but I had to tell them the truth about that. In 1981 the Lord spoke to me and told me to go to a little place called L., South Carolina which is a suburb of H., South Carolina. But prior to that the Lord told me, and I've dealt with this about three years before I left my home church.

Bishop: Was the home church a Baptist Church?

Dr. Y.: No, this was a Pentecostal Church. See I left the Baptist Church when I got filled with the Holy Ghost and baptized. I left the Baptist

church and went to this Pentecostal church. When I connected to the Pentecostal church that's when the spirit of God and the inspiration of God began to work in my life so in three years prior to me coming out of my home church the Lord had began to work on me for the position of Pastor. The Bishop, he asked me did I want to become a pastor of one of our vacant churches that we had in Georgia. I told him at that time, no I don't want to do that now because I'm working and I have small children and I don't think that would be feasible for me to do it. He said well I tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to make you acting evangelist for the state of Georgia so I accepted that.

Periodically we would go out and do revival for different churches and then we would come back to the home church. There were times where I was encouraged to go national for the organization but I went and spoke with my Pastor. My Pastor said no I needed you here to help me with this ministry. Now my flesh said, "Oh my Godsh, look at the opportunity but the Spirit said listen Ok you just need to humble under leadership. So I stayed. I did not go national at that time. You know I am a person that believes in timing and for me to know about timing some things have been working in my life and began to know about the development of them on the time of timing and God's time is not our time. I find that I thought I was missing something when I did not go national as a young person and I worked. The Pastor knew that the Lord was calling me into ministry and Pastorate and I told him, Pastor I know God is calling me into the Pastorate but I don't know when and I don't know where but whenever God gives me the confirmation, you will be the first person to know. Pastor said ok I know the Lord is working in your life toward Pastorate and I have to say yes. But the Lord spoke to me when I was walking down the hallway in my house and He said Levee. I did not know where Levee was and a friend of mine had a church over here which I use to do revivals for a lot and I would hear them on the radio, they had a radio broadcast, and when the Lord said Levee I said, "Lord I don't want to go over there and be in competition with them", not thinking about



Burger King will be on one corner and Wendy's on the other. It was my feeling that I did not want to be competition to my friend. I took off and went to a place in Savannah by the name of Rockdale Street and I found the building over there. I asked an individual, I would like to know some information about this building because we would like to use it to start church. It use to be an old club and the individual told me let me talk to my husband about it and you come back and I'll let you know. I said ok thank you. I left there and I went back home because my spirit was in turmoil because God said ok it time for you to get here. He had already told me where to go but I was just going elsewhere. So when I got back home I was not satisfied so I was going back out again and I went to a place up in M.ville in South Carolina which is a part of J.County. It was a connecting suburb between H., Sounth Carolina and M.ville, still had not got to L., South Carolina. I went all around L., South Carolina, so I went and talked to a man in a barber shop. He was the first person that I talked to in L., South Carolina about a place. He said well I'm working right now and I might have a place for you but come back. I said ok sir I'll be back so I came on and felt a little heavy in my spirit and went on back to Savannah.

.....I talked with the lady and she said I think the man that had the building just died a few months ago so nobody is in the building. She said I know the person that we can go to and I said I'm coming. We went to check on the building that we first looked at in '81. The man that owned the building at that particular time had to go to a funeral and his cousin said he'll be back shortly. I said well we just sit here and talk to you until he comes back then we will approach him about the building. When he came back we talked with him and he said yes and I told him what we will do is fix it up. We'll pay you rent, whatever you want. Then he said we may start having Bible study in there on Tuesday nights. His wife said if you are going to let her have that building let her have it and he said ok you can have the building.

He carried us to the building and opened it up and woo it was like a shack but we went in there and I went to Savannah.]

I got my Pastor that same day and brought my Pastor back over here in Hardeeville to see this little building. We had prayer in that building the first day. Then my husband, he was working at night, and he started working in the day time. The prophesy that God gave me to give him was, "When you all finish doing the work around here God will give you a day job". For one year my husband was not able to attend service with us at night. I would drive from Hardeeville over to Savannah Tuesdays, Fridays, and Sundays until that happened. The first person that got saved in our ministry was a young man who did not belong to anybody else's church. I made a statement to God when he said Levee because there is my friend over. God told me that there are people out there in those woods that do not belong to anybody's church. The first person that got the Holy Spirit in our church was a young man. His wife was a very communable person. She worked on the school board. She worked on this and that. She was well known in the community but he did not go to church and he was the first one that got the Holy Ghost and from that day that was history. God started sending folks up in there and He told me don't move until I fill this place. We could see about 75 to 100 people in that little building and on Sunday folks were on top of one another. He then told me to seek property to build and when I went to seek property to build He made a way for us. He opened the door for us and gave us favor. We came up through the ranks by the leading of God. I'm so thankful that I did not national in my early 20's. Now that God has developed me, I have been all national, international, locally, state, and all around but it was all about timing.

Question 7: How long did you stay in H., South Carolina? Did you move from H., South Carolina to here?

Answer 7: Yes. Let me tell you about H., South Carolina. God does so many things, come to find out the building was in L., South Carolina. The

building was in L., South Carolina but the town was H., South Carolina and that where God told me to come. It was like a puzzle to see how God pulled it together. There on highway 170 Alt in L., South Carolina(LSC) which the town is called H., South Carolina (HSC) but from the beginning when I was walking in my hallway God said LSC. I went all around thinking I was in HSC and I'm in LSC. I wound up in LSC. I am convinced that this is God's doing not mine. I don't have anything to do with it. I just follow his direction and every since he gave me that direction I started doing my thing. Maybe I had my Jonah in a sense but I wound up just where He told me to go.

Question 8: Just give me a time, how long were you in the first building?

Answer 8: I was in the first building for seven years. It is something about God. In the seventh year seemed like I could see the turning of ministry and of God doing things. We stayed there from '81 and we came to my present church now in '89. We dedicated my present church in '89 and the Bishop D. E. from the north came and dedicated the church. He was one of my mentors, Bishop D.E. Now his son, Bishop C.E. is the one that is carrying on the ministry now. When we started elevating women in the Pentecostal seminary groups of the world because there were struggles and there still are struggles with females in certain positions but I was the first District Elder from the state of Georgia for the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (PWA). The fact about it is, I think I was the fourth District Elder in the whole organization of PWA where they started they started making women District Elders. I was the fourth District Elder for the organization and the first one for the state of Georgia and it took us ten years to pray about it and politically get it through the house and to get the elevation up for females. Now we are in the process, which it has been passed, of getting women to the place where they can be promoted to Bishops. We are going to be in Minneapolis, Minnesota and I don't know who will be elevated because we have so many different others in the nationals. So I'm not sure if any Bishops have elevated a

woman to the Bishop rank yet but they do have the privilege to do that because it came into play when we were in Atlanta last year at the National convention. It came across the floor and was voted upon.

Question 9: In the History of that organization no female has ever come into the position of a Bishop?

Answer 9: No, never.

Question 10: How long has the organization been going on?

Answer 10: Oh no, PAW is one of the oldest organizations in the world especially on the apostolic side. Other organizations have branched off from the PAW. PAW was back in the early 1900's, it about 80 or 90 years old. It could be older than that I'm not sure but a lot of organizations have gone off from the PAW.

Question 11: You are a part of the PAW?

Answer 11: Yes, I am under their umbrella.

Question 12: Are you the only female Pastor in Georgia or in this area?

Answer 12: No I'm not. There is a female Pastor in Savannah, a couple in Savannah and on the outer edge of Georgia. I am so close to Georgia that when I came here I just remained with the Georgia (di-i-cee). I could have gone to the South Carolina (di-i-cee) because every state has their own (di-i-cee) but since I came from Georgia and was so close I just stayed in the Georgia one. There are some more females in Georgia and South Carolina.

Question 13: Is everything in ministry now what you thought it would be when you first started?

Answer 13: No, No, No. I really did not have an inkling of how ministry would be because I had to build a relationship with God myself. If we don't build a relationship with God ourselves we will be convicted and dictated to by other folks but when you build a relationship with

God you and He can communicate just like you are communicating with someone else. I'm saying that to say this, He will give you directions and instructions on how to do, what to do, and when to do it. When I came out to pasturing I was quite small and a lot of Pastors that I knew they were a large size and young, physically. It makes a difference sometimes because people will think sometimes that all Pastors have to be big and huge but not so. I was young and respected the elders but it just did not happen the way that I thought they would take me under their wings. They would say Young you need to do this or Young you need to do that. I hit the brick wall quite a few times. Then I had to find out for myself. That's why I will tell anybody, you've got to know that you know who you know and you've got to know that God has called you to do Pastoral work not anybody else because every Pastor has a different task. I cannot put my Pastoral reign on your side because you might deal with different people and every different group of people has different mindsets. So it's like a trial run as you come to it or get into it then you face it. Like Paul, when Paul was in ministry going from one country to another he did not know what he was going to encounter until he got there although the Lord had revealed some things to him. Individually he did not really know how they were going to respond. That's why I always mention you in my prayers and I pick you up in my prayers. This is why Paul would say this. I really had to buckle down because many times we get locked into tradition and when we get locked into tradition you are not going to expand anymore than your traditional role model but God is not about fully traditionalism. When I sought out my relationship with God I prayed. I just laid out before God and I would just seek God and He would speak to me. God will talk to you audibly just like I'm talking to you right now. As I was praying and I was young and I would talk to God and say send hearers to the word. Save souls for the Kingdom. God would say to me, "Young, called me by my name. I'm going to bless you if you have patience to wait". You hear me? These are the words that I heard from God, not

from my mentor, not from my prodigies or whatever but from God. God said, "Young I'm going to bless you if you have patience to wait". Now what happened with me was, my blessings are coming to me on the protocol of my patience. If I wait on God and have patience, He done said what He was going to do and He's going to do it. There has been some very devastating times in my life but God has always brought some consolation to me by talking to me and when I build that relationship with Him. Let me tell you something, when you build a relationship with God you know who you are, you know who's speaking to you, and you know that if you follow His directions He will do it. There are members that will tell you in a minute ant no reason in talking to Dr. Young about some things because the first thing she's going to tell you is let me let a prayer by it. I know when I pray we believe that God will give us an answer for whatever situation and that's how you move in ministry. I may not move as fast as some may want me to move but I can't move until I get the ok. I don't care how many people get on an airplane, you can't move until the aviation building says you can take off. You sit right there. There have been times when I felt like I have really been broken but I never felt like God has left me, never. I have felt lonely because I would like to interact with some more folks but some folks are so untouchable I just have to deal with what I have to deal with. I remember one time I was praying and my rib was broken and I told the Lord I'm trying to do everything I can to help the people. That's what I'm all about, if I can help the people spiritually, naturally or whatever I'll try to do that. I was crying and praying right there in my sanctuary and I said Lord I'm trying to do everything I can to help folks. Why is this, about me and the Lord spoke to me again and said why not you. I said thank you Sir and I just went to telling Him thank you. When I thought about all that He went through nothing compares to what he's done in this church. The Lord blessed us to build up the sanctuary and seat 400 to 500 people. When we opened up the wall we could do 25,000. As we built the church we did it with less than 100 people, never had

a mortgage on it. People look at finished product but they don't know how long the product has been in process. It took us three years to build this church 48 by 96 plus we built up 3,624 sq.ft. wing on to it. When we got through, in the mist of all of that building, I was still working and Pasturing the Lord told me to go to Genesis and read the first chapter. So I went home and read the first chapter. When He did His task for that day He said it is good so the next day in the space of time He went back to work. When He got finished with that particular day He closed it out and said good. When He got down to the sixth day He closed it out and said that is very good and on the seventh day rest. When I went back and I began to digest and think about what he did everyday with the grass, the water, the birds, and even healing....the sixth day. He spoke to me and said now you read that dissect that and you see what I did every day. Whatever I had scheduled to do, I did it every day and I did it on time. Now I could have done everything that I did in one day but I took my time. I say thank you sir. That was soothing to me, how my God kept me through His operation of ministry because that's what He was doing. He was keeping the development of His ministry and creation. Timing to me is my most important property. I said thank you Lord.

Question 14: Was there any pain spiritually or emotionally that you experienced in your ministry from 14 years old to where you are now?

Answer 14: There have been some tremendous pains in ministry. When you have been let down and folk that you have deposited into and you have seen them come from situations that they were in and God has blessed their lives spiritually where they did not know Genesis from Revelations. God has blessed them with some understanding and power where they were overloaded, so you've done all of this then they backfire on you. That physically and emotionally hurts you. That's why I try to stay with the word to keep me from losing it because when things like that happen to me I have to relate back to God. I have to look back at how He walked, He talked, He healed, He

delivered and then they still turned around and crucified him. That helps me because there is nothing new it's happened before but it hurts. It's pain. To the next phase, our ministry, the Lord has blessed us and like He said he would He will. If you just stay focused, I don't care what folks say or what they do. The word of God says there is no weapon that's coming against you shall be able to prosper, every tongue that rises up shall be condemned so don't worry about that just leave it alone because God is going to handle it. Sometimes those that hurt you are going to have to come back by you. That's word because He said that I will make your enemies be your footstool. See this is why I try to balance my endeavors with the word of God. Now does that hurt my flesh? Yes it does because my flesh really wants to come loose and do what it wants to do but by me coinciding with the word it helps me to hold my position. Because when you start reacting the way folks want you to react, they are controlling you. Are you with me? You can't react the way people want you to react but you act the God wants you to react and you will come out more than a winner. The Lord has blessed us here to put up a family life center, more pain, a seven journey to put up a structure to assist people in the community for ministry in the kingdom activity. Building wise the church is ok but here God is extending my vision and I'm stepping out on faith and in faith believing God because I take these faith walks. We walk by faith and not by sight. I've never been able to see what we've been able to accomplish, we just walk by faith. He's given us the vision and by giving us the vision He has made the provision for it. I can see God allowing us to build affordable houses in our next phase of the vision. We moved into the family life center in 2000. It is 22,000 sf.

Question 15: Were you ordained?

Answer 15: Yes, I was ordained in '82 by the PWA.

Question 16: Were there any painful encounters that involved male and female situations.



Answer 16: Yes, there has been some pain because of lack of knowledge from my members. It's not just Pentecostal members but its members. Therefore the lack of knowledge should not stop you in your actions.

Question 17: What would you tell a woman who knew that God called her and God has placed in her heart that she must become a founder and Pastor of a church?

Answer 17: I really would tell her to seek God for directions. That would be my first thing, be sure that God has empowered your life and this is where God really wants you to be at because many times folks will look at somebody else and think this is what God has called them to do but I would tell her to seek God for directions.

**APPENDIX C**  
**FOCUS GROUPS**

## Focus Group Secession 1

04/29/10

### Notes:

The First Women's Bible Study-Wounded Clergy Women Walking in Their Call with Pain.

John 4:13

We read the verses of John 4:13 from the Bible of the woman at the well story .

She was not a well woman but she knew who she was. This women they said had 5 husbands. Jesus called her out, but she realized who she was.

From within you, what was her destiny? When she dropped her pot she dropped her past. She dropped everything that was old and picked up the new.

She had a message and she was a woman. Even though God knew who she was He still choose to use her.

What was the healing water? The Holy Ghost

The woman really didn't want to hear this man but we just have to keep telling the word. When the word got in her, she changed.

The true word came when we know and realized that we worship in spirit and in truth. We will pick up with this at the next secession on May 13<sup>th</sup>.

Jesus wants us to stay balanced and he does not want us to put down our brothers, even though we want to share.

### The Tape:

(Cl W-Butts)But she dropped the pot. She dropped everything that was behind and she ran for the new. The water that she had in the pot was old water, stale water and He said that He would give her fresh water that would well up from the inside for eternal life. So she ran with it and how many times have we picked up something and ran with it. She ran toward the men that at no doubt she had slept with at one time or another. She had some relationship with because she already had five and He said the one you got now is not yours. So when she ran what made them stop and pay attention to her? She was common. She knew them and they knew her but it was something when she dropped that pot, that old way but it looked new. Everything about her was new that they would stop when the saw her and she said come see a man that told me all about me. They said

something about you has changed, something working on the inside has brought about a change. It says they ran, the whole town ran to see the man that made that change in her life. That was that new when she dropped that old pot.

(Cl W-Chapl) Then she forgot all about that hurt that she was feeling before she met Jesus and feel like what she gave...

(Bis. Shabazz) Can someone else share with me your experiences also?

(Cl W-) I would like to say also when she dropped the water pot and she begin to run saying come see a man, I feel as though she had a message. She was taking a message. She had a word and that's what she was doing. She was on her way to give that word so this is what we are called to do in ministry, give that word just like Mary had the word when she met the angel at the tomb. Jesus told her go and tell my disciples to meet me in Galilee. I call that bringing the word because she had a message.

(Cl W-Wright) I see that she was a Samaritan and the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritan women. She was also a woman. That lets me know that God can use whom ever. He used this woman to go in town and tell the men. God already knew this woman and what she had been through and what she was going through. He wanted to give her some water so she would not have to go seeking for love in all the wrong places

(Cl W-Butts) I see a point in it when Jesus went to this woman speaking to her and she didn't really want to hear. First she didn't really understand and then when he got into her personal life telling her about these men she didn't really want to hear this word. Don't want to even hear the truth but that tells us right there that we just need to continue to tell the word, tell the word, and tell the word. And the word got in her. When the word gets in you that's when that change is going to come. That why we got to continue to tell the word because sometimes you know she is not going to listen. But we got to continue to tell the word because we can't change anybody but that word got into her and made that change.

(Cl W-Chapl) She recognized who Jesus was and that when that connection happened. That's when she listened and perceived the word. The word is going to do the cleansing and when it does the cleansing it will make the change. It's what made the change with her.

(Cl W-Butts) She said give me that living water and that word did a quick change in her. That's why she could run and tell that. Not only that but that Holy Ghost is going to be the one that keeps her

(Cl W-Older Sis) That's why Jesus said the time is going to come when .....will rush them in spirit and in truth because God is a spirit. He that worship God must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

(Bis. Shab) We are women, we are women leaders of the church. We are not persons who want to put down our brothers. We want to share and we want to continue to share but we want to do what God has called us to do and with this story I also see that God has placed balance from the extremities of life. The Samaritan woman, according to some of the writers, was who she say she was but balance came into her life because Jesus showed up. I thank you all so much for coming.

We will pick up on May 13<sup>th</sup>

## Focus Group Session 2

05/13/10

In our second secession our title was “Facing Myself: Waiting in Labor in the Institutional Church”.

The over all subject of this project is Wounded Clergy Women: Walking in Their Call as Clergy Leaders and succeeding.

We will now do a recap on focus group secession 1. The scripture reference that was used was

John 4:1-42

Title: Who am I (The woman at the well)

She was not just a woman at the well. We see that that sister had a destiny. They talked about all the things that have gone on in her life and journey. We all have journeys and a story. We are still journeying on but just like the woman at the well, she had to find out who was she? Then God touched her and said, “I want to give you living water so you can move on according to my purpose according to my will”.

In session 2 we talked about our title in relation to our subject and I have to make sure the focus is still there on the title (title was repeated). Like the woman at the well we too, even in our wounded-ness and even in the place where we have gone to learn and seek salvation has hurt us. We are talking about the church and what has happened to us as clergy leaders but we are still standing. We are still standing but like the woman at the well we too have a destinies according to God’s purpose as clergy women. Even in our hurt and our pain we still have a purpose.

In our second session our title was “Facing Myself: Waiting in Labor in the Institution of the Church”. We came from the subject from the book of Luke 13:10-13 where we talked about the crippled woman who met Jesus and He touched her. She was bent over, she couldn’t straighten up for 18 whole years. We talked about some of the things that may have caused her to be crippled. We talked about from our own experiences oppression as one of the things that may have caused her back not to be straighten up. We talked about sexism. We talked about chauvinism. We talked about how back in Biblical times how women were treated as property. As property, having no rights whatsoever but even in that experience, just like we in ministry there are things that have caused our backs to be bent over. But we know Jesus. Jesus told the woman to come into the temple, “come forth”. When Jesus told the woman to come forth he said, “Woman Thou Art Loosed”.

Some of the participants were saying being free, being liberated from adversities in the church. One of the pastors said that the Lord told her to step out and go into her own church, but she told us there was not help. She talked about there was a lack of help. In this context of the book of Luke it says in the new international version, "Woman you are set free" and we need to move forward even in your crippled situation. I can touch you. Jesus can touch us even though it states that in 18 long years in the Bible but that's just a number. It was a long time but even in the length of time it took, it is in God's own time when God can change a situation and allow us to stand up, straighten up, and be free and move forward in the purpose that God has for us.

#### NOTES:

This session was opened with a prayer by Min. Wright

Bishop Shabazz made mention of the classes last week. A card was given to each attendee turned over and they were asked who's name was on the otherside of the card. The women replied with a woman's have from the Bible that they could personally relate to from their own life experiences. The cards had names like Alice and Sue.

The end of the first weeks recap: Facing Myself-Title #2 Waiting In Labor.

Luke 13:10- After Bishop taught the verses in Luke. She asked three individual women to explain a crippling bent over experience: When you get over looked and you know God said this is what you are supposed to do. Explain.

We will meet next Thursday @ 7p.m.

### Focus Group Session 3

05/20/10

Now we're here on tonight for secession 3. We're going to be coming from the book of I Samuel 1:4. Since it's just us we can break this thing down. I'll start off reading from the new international version therefore Bishop started, and Bishop told Mother Jackson you can finish off. I'm going to start with verse 4. Hear what the Lord has said, "Whenever the day came for Elkanah to sacrifice, he would give portions of the meat to his wife Peninnah and all her sons and daughters. But to Hannah he gave a double portion because he loved her and the Lord had closed her wound. And because the Lord had closed her wound, her rival kept provoking her in order to irritate her. This went on year after year. Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the Lord her rival provoked her till she wept and would not eat. Elkanah, her husband, would say to her "Hannah why are you weeping? Why don't you eat? Why are you down hearted? Don't I mean more to you than ten sons?"

Mother Jackson (SHE WAS READING FROM THE KING JAMES VERSION) can you start at verse 9? "Once when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on a chair by the door post of the Lords tabernacle of the Lord. And she was with bitterness of soul and prayed to the Lord and wept with anguish. Then she made a vow and said oh Lord of hosts if you will indeed look on my only affliction..... and not forget your maid servant but will give your maid servant a child a male child then I will give him back to you Lord and all the days of his life there shall come on raiser upon his head.

Can you start at 12 for us?(SHE IS ALSO READING FORM THE KING JAMES VERSION) "And it shall come to past as she continued praying before the Lord that Eli marked her mouth. Now Hannah, she spoke in her heart. Only her lips moved and her voice was not heard. Their for Eli thought she had been drinking. And Eli said unto her, how long wilt thou be drunken? Put away thy wine for the and Hannah answered and said No my Lord, I am a woman of sorrow, of sorrowful spirit. I neither drank neither wine nor strong drink. But have poured out my soul before the Lord. Count not thy hand maid for a daughter of bail for out of the abundance of complaint and grief have I spoken hither to. Then Eli answered and said go in peace and the God of Israel grant the thy petition. That thou has asked of him".

Ok, Amen. Thank you so much and 17 reads in the new international version, "Eli answered go in peace and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of God." We see here God has spoke the truth. Our title for tonight is "Dealing with my Predicament". We have hear Elkanah and his two wives Peninnah and Hannah. Hannah, a woman after Gods own heart. She loved the Lord and back in those days during this time



when they were women who did not bear children they were treated as outcast. They were treated as if God had cursed them. Hannah did not want to feel that way. She questioned God and asked God why. Why did you do this to me what have I done. As we continue to talk, hear what God has said to Hannah. In the mean time, the practice here in the United States somewhere is still the same even in 2010. We are studying today Elkanah had two wives Hannah and Peninnah. The other wife, she had many children, many sons and many daughters. Elkanah married the two women but he loved Hannah who didn't have any children. I know you all know the story. Our title is talking about dealing with my predicament, Hannah and Peninnah. How do I handle Peninnah because, (think about this) we all have a Peninnah. Staying within the context of Wounded Clergy Women walking in Their Call as Clergy Leaders and succeeding. Somebody mentioned in one of our earlier secessions about this jealousy piece that she experienced in the church causing her wounds and causing her pain and this is where I believe Peninnah was extremely jealous of Hannah. Here is Hannah with her hands up saying, "why Lord, why me". Looking at her with all of the children, nobody is marking her. She goes to the church and nobody is looking at her or saying anything especially when they go to the temple. In the Bible it says especially when they go to the house of the Lord. Peninnah provokes continuously Hannah.

(Other Clergy Woman) As I sit and ponder this I'm thing about this and sometimes God will put somebody in your path to provoke you but it's provoking you to be blessed because a lot of times we may sit down and not get up. Then if somebody comes along and they have a spirit of jealousy and they start provoking you. They may look at you and say you just sitting their. You know God gave you a gift and it says here, "this man went out of the city yearly to worship. So this was a yearly thing and it was constantly that she was provoking her but this one time she was like okay. I have had enough of this. That's when she began to cry out to God in her bitterness. In her bitterness she prayed unto the Lord and she wept sorely because you see you get to a point in your life where you get tired of people provoking you. You get tired of people walking over you and pushing you to the side. Sooner or later you rise up and say okay God you've given me that authority, you've given me the power.

(Bis. Shabazz) Yes. Absolutly. This story in Hannah's bitterness talks about victory. It talks about break through. It talks about a new life. It talks about deliverance. It talks about a change, a change of life. It also talks about intercession and obedience. But God did something new in Hannah and it was something that was remarkable. Just like in my life, blessings have come in overflow but it had not always been. It had not always been remarkable. Just like with Hannah, it hadn't always been a blessing.

(Other Clergy Woman) And I know that when we're going through something people just don't understand and they'll say that because you go to church you're not supposed to get depressed. You're not supposed to get upset. I was saying just like with Hannah she got upset. She got depressed but when you're in the church people feel that you're not suppose to get upset, especially the leaders. They expect the leaders to be, I've heard people say, oh you're strong you're a prayer warrior. Like they told them one Tuesday night, even the prayer warrior needs somebody to pray with her sometimes. That's why I say, "you haven't walked in my shoes, you don't know what I may be going through. Yes, I may be the prayer warrior but even the prayer needs somebody. You don't see nobody out there on the battle field by themselves.

(Bis. Shabazz) No, not at all.

(Bis. Shabazz) We're in I Samuel 1. Hannah prayed, that's what she did when all else was just breaking down for her she said Lord have mercy, praying a pleading prayer.

(Other Clergy Woman) I'm sure she was like you got to get like ... sometimes with the nose running and crying. When you're praying with God you don't care you aren't trying to be pretty.

(Bis. Shabazz) Umm. I've been there when I said why like Hannah did. Why me Lord and could not understand, like Hannah. I did everything you asked me to do. I walked, talked, did everything but still they said, "no" to me and the pain. The weeping like Hannah, the desperation that took over. This is why Hannah's story is such a good example of how we can also get the answers to our prayers during our desperate times even though we are going through. In our hurt, pain, confusion, in our depression, and in our outcast-ness like Hannah God was still here and answered our prayers. Thank you Jesus.

(Other Clergy Woman-Mother Jackson) You know sometimes God intends for us to go through these things to see how we will handle them. We see here she had to pray. God allows us to go through these kind of things. I've been there. God allows you to go through and He brings you out.

(Bis. Shabazz) Even to a point to where, when you're going through you don't even know how you're going to get out.

(Other Clergy Woman) Before you know anything your through with it.

(Bis. Shabazz) When you trust God, when you know God like Hannah did. It was because Hannah was provoked by Peninnah that she finally took the kind of action that got results. Who said that we can be provoked to the point, we are talking about all of us who have Peninnah's, in our lives that causes us to get in an uncomfortable situation. We

are women of God with a purpose. The thing about it, I do believe that at this particular point in our lives that we are almost clear to what God wants us to do but we believe some things that we think are impossible. That we go through certain situations that I know God called me to lead the church, I know God called me to be the senior Pastor but there are some Peninnah's hanging out with you provoking you. I know God has called me not just to be in the back with the babies but to be over the church, the Pastor over the young people. I know God has been walking with me for a long, longtime but there are some Peninnah's that have been hanging out in our lives provoking us. Moved back from the North back to the South, knocking on the doors. We are talking about these Peninnah's that cause us to be. Me preaching, Pastor, I know you not talking about me God. We got too much business to run. We have four children and back then all of them was little just coming out and working with young folk. I know. We are talking about these Peninnah's that provokes us in our wounded-ness but to make us move into the purpose that God has created us to do I pray that in these secessions we are growing and that we are getting something to move us in our purpose. To move us even the more. She prayed and God granted a sign not in Hannah's time but in God's time and this is where Samuel came from and all of that hurt and all of that pain. You know Hannah had to endure some stuff. Folks lying on you...

(Other Clergy Woman) You know it's all about the lie. We have been living and sometime we have been living a lie so long that we believe it's true. We believe the lie like Hannah, She was told that she could not have a son and was teased about not having a son so that was a lie but until she brought the truth. You see the truth will run a lie so she stood up and said God if you give me a son I'll give him back to you but when she was believing in a lie she could not have a son so it all about the lie. If we could just move on from the lie, It's not our mouth that rebukes the devil it the truth that rebukes the devil. I all about the lie. We stay in the lie then we stay down but when we stand in truth that's when we are able and God is able to move. You see that's why it's time to take the lie off and put on the truth and be a new creature.

(Bis. Shabazz) When we move out of living the lie like Hannah we can rise. We can succeed in our purpose, in our calling, people. We go through but just like God granted Hannah her request God will do the same thing for us in 2010 and beyond. We are warriors. We are still standing women of God and we don't have to go back far in our own stories to see that some of the things that we've gone through could have taken us out, but God. God's purposes worked out through Hannah even in her desperateness and all the years God blessed her. Hannah was able to walk through the streets being a proud women and not vain, being a thankful woman, being a woman who praised God. Being a woman who rose out of the circumstances and made the decision to seek the Lord and God poured out on her. See some things that we think are impossible when hurt and pain try to take us off course are still possible with God. We may think, God I know you

called me to be the leader. It seemed impossible for Hannah but God says I called you. I called you in ministry. I called you in Ministry and Leadership. There is nothing impossible for me.

(Other Clergy Woman) It's like we have to go through a refining fire, the refining fire. You're going through all those years and all those things but God was preparing her for Samuel and all those years. And when the time came, when Peninnah was provoking her, that when she went this is it, enough is enough and then she begin the bitter weeping, crying out like a woman in trivial. You know it's like we have to go through the fire eventhough you are going to go through the fire it's not going to burn you. It's going to take off all those impurities burn off all those lies and all of that. It doesn't feel good but you got to go through.

(Bis. Shabazz) We've got to go through.

(Other Clergy Woman-M J) But you know you got to go through it again. If you don't go through it the right way. You'll go through it again and again and again. That's it.

(Other Clergy Woman) You have to pay for your strength. People don't know what you have to go through to be strong, they just don't know. They want to be envious and say I want to be like so-n-so but you don't know what they had to go through. Lord I want to be what you want me to be. You got to say Yes Lord.

(Bis. Shabazz) Saying Yes Lord in spite of the impossibilities. Ladies, Women of the Cloth even with the church we've got to take our positions where God has called us to be. I have a few questions to ask:

- 1) Are you willing to stand like Hannah and pour out your heart to God and ask God what do you need me to do?
- 2) Do we need breakthroughs?
- 3) Do we need deliverance in order to move forward in our calling and succeeding as Clergy Women?
- 4) Do we need God to intervene into the situation?
- 5) How desperate are we to do what God has called us to do? Who know what God can't do in your life? God knows, only God knows. Just like God ask Ezekel can these bones live? (song: He saw the Best in Me)

(Bis. Shabazz) In our call and purpose of life and pleasing God we can't minister, we can't lead, we can't help folk if we did not go through something. Jesus allows everything, even every misstep. Everything is divinely permitted by God.

As we continue to move forward, dealing with my predicament. I think we know how to do that. Let us pray.

## Focus Group Session 4

05/29/10

A recap on Focus Group 3:

Our Topic was Walking in .... As Clergy Leaders. Session 1 our title was *"Who am I"* and we came from John 4:1-42. Session 2 was *"Facing Myself: Waiting in Labor in the Institutional Church."* Session 3 was *"Dealing with "My Predicament(s)"* where we came from the book of I Samuel verses 1-28.

(Bishop. Shab) Now we are into Session 4. The title for session 4 is Wounded Clergy Women: Walking in Their Call as Clergy Leaders and Succeeding: *"Advancing to Be My Best Me, Beautiful Me at Last"*. When we first started we did a pre-questionnaire to see where all of us were and now we are in the post stage. We're closing out and finishing up. Most of you know about Prov. 31 and if we are not familiar with it we just need to become. Proverbs 31:10b. Can you read this part Pastor?

(Cl W-Pastor ) Who can find a virtuous woman for her price is far above rubies? (KJV)

(Cl W-Butts) Who can find a mobile wife? (NIV)

(Cl W-Mother J) Who is worth far more than rubies? (NKJ)

(Cl W-Min. Wright) Who can find a virtuous woman for a price is far above rubies? (KJV)

(Bis. Shab) Just those few words still hold. I am reading now out of the New King James (NKJ). For her worth is far above rubies. At this point we have been beat up, beat down, stepped on, we've been crucified and laid out and nailed to the cross. We have been resurrected and rejuvenated. We are up walking and moving in our call from God as Clergy Leaders and succeeding. On top of that, according to Proverbs 31:10b it says we are worth far more than rubies. The Bible says that we are worth far more than rubies. We cannot lie down and wallow in despair when every woman we talked about in these sessions, every last one of them, got up and moved on, every last one of them.

(Cl W-Sis) I preached one Sunday, Get up and do something. Sometimes you got to make every minute count. My sister preached about time. It's steady moving and it don't wait for no one. You cannot do anything and let time pass you by but it's steady moving you are just going to miss that time.

(Cl W-Older Sis) It seems that time is moving faster than it use to. The day seemed longer. Back in the day the days were long.

(Cl W-Chapl) One of my teachers in High School use to have a sign up on the wall next to the clock that said, "Time will pass, but will you" and I never forgot that. The time is passing and you are watching the clock but will you pass this class? We are so busy watching the time but we are not doing anything and that's what's going on in the church.

(Cl W-Wright) The thing about that is that we don't give time to the Holy Spirit because we want to be out by 1:00 p.m. on Sundays. We don't allow the time for the Holy Ghost to come in like we use to. The song says, "Oh Zion, what's the matter now".

(Cl W- Sis) I have also seen where you will be in church and when the Holy Spirit comes in they cut it off. It was getting to high for them, even the Pastor has cut it off.

(Bis. Shab.) This is the reason why all of what we have said, we don't have time. Is time going to pass and you don't pass? This is the reason why we have to rise up and do what God has told us to do. All of our lives are purposeful. We are not created just to be. Pastor G. knew that. When the male leadership said no I am not going to give you an appointment. I don't care what God called you to do. We are talking about time and entering into the Holy of Holy's. We are talking about the word coming forth so deliverance and salvation can take place. We can't afford it. Back in the day time seem to take a long time but now it short. We've got to move forward in our calling in spite of, there is no more time. We've got to rise up. They said no but God said yes. We've got to move. The talents and gifts of leadership are in you but because tradition has held us back and male dominancy. When you know better you do better because God holds us responsible. When you get where you are going you can't turn your back on the sisters who are coming behind us. We have to be the living examples.

(Bis. Shab.) I thought it was something new that took place in my wounded-ness with the AME Church. I thought it was a new thing where male leadership did not want women to be Clergy leaders in the church. This thing has been going on for centuries and centuries.

(Cl W-) Another clergyman told another clergyman from the outside told some of the men in my church, "You better get out of her church before you go to hell". They will say that God did not call woman to preach and if you stay here in my church you are going to die. But my members did not pay them any attention because I bring THE WORD and they love it.

(Bis. Shab) It's real and we have to ignore them because we have to stand like that when you all become the leaders. You might say that what they are saying can't be, but it's real.

(Cl W-Pastor) Like I told my members in my church, when my eyes are closed, and I go on home, they must go on and the church shall be pass down to another female not a male. I worked it up and it is going to carry on with another female until eternity.  
*Tell the Lord Thank You!*

(Bis. Shab) We have to do our part for the next generation, to make sure the women that have THE CALL on their lives, do not leave the church. Some wounded women must stay in the institutional church and do not need to leave. But they need to know they can success and be who God Called them to be there. We have to continue to work in our ministries so that the women who are coming after us will have some role models they can see and read about. They will be able to say, thank you Jesus, Oh there is somebody that I can see who has risen and is successful in ministry. The generations of women to come must to make changes in their lifetime. Therefore, we've got to do our part and not allowing the next generation of females to come and not have role models for them, especially those who will have that power to lead the church.

(Min. Wright) The Lord took me to I Peter 2:21 (KJV). I was looking back over my notes I took in all 3 previous Sessions and notice how all of these women we're studying are going through something and here we are going through something. It says for believing here unto were ye called because Christ also suffered for us leaving us an example that we should follow His steps. I began to think about that and the Lord said He called us, we are going to suffer because Christ suffered for us and if Christ suffered for us then are we any less that we are not going to go through some things. Being a Bishop, Pastor, Evangelist we're going to get hurt. We're going to be persecuted but He kept on. The scripture said, "Who didn't know sin, neither was guile found in his mouth", in other words he kept on loving the people even while He was hanging on the cross. He looked down and said Father forgive them for they know not what they are doing. Even with Hannah and Peninnah, when Hannah was being persecuted year after year and finally she got to a point where she said enough is enough and she begin to cry out to God. She wasn't moving her mouth but in her heart she was crying out. In our lives we may not be moving our mouths but if we just sit still and let God move in our hearts He will just work it out. It's like God was saying, "Get up, get up and go do something". And I just said, "Ok God, what do you want me to do? Your word is like a lamp unto my feet and a light to my path. You put me on the path that I may be on and do what you want me to do". Then later I got and invitation to go to the jail and I said that an open door.

(Bis. Shab) I got to help you. We've got to get you moving. What church did you come from Pastor G.? I just want to put that out there on the table to help you. Speak to us Pastor G.

(Cl W-Past. Green) Church of God in Christ, I got saved in it and had been there for many years but I was also held back for many years there. That's where I was told



that God do want no woman to preach. When I use to preach the word as a Missionary some would say, "Oh you preached the word tonight" and he would say no you taught. Yes, I did my preaching from the floor not from the pulpit. We could not go up there. They are getting a little better now but things still are not like they should be. When you have a small church and you go to the convention, most of the time your name is not called. I know a Pastor that dissolved her church because of that. She said they didn't even call her name when they were calling the names of all the churches and hers was nowhere in the mist of them. They are trying now because a lot of the ladies are pulling out and they have a lot of the other ladies with them and they don't want all of them to go. If all the ladies, this is in every church, if all the ladies stick together and the ladies begin to leave the church they won't have anybody. Men won't do things like ladies in the church. In the church the ladies are doing it, the ladies are doing it, the ladies are sponsoring it and they are doing everything so that why they don't want you to leave. It's because they an't got but a hand full and they don't want you to go. But they know If that lady say I'm pulling out and all the other ladies say I'm going with her they don't like that. They will be mad with you the rest of your life for taking them. They'll say she took the members and no she didn't take the members the members don't want that and they want to follow the word. We need to keep the scripture in mind that says God have not given you a spirit of fear and know that fear is not of God.

(Cl W-Wright) A Preacher told me that I have to stop letting the devil blackmail me with my past and I do let them blackmail me.

(Bis. Shab) But you have to move forward because as the teacher said with the clock. Time passes but will you? Mother Jackson God just dropped something in my spirit. It is because of your experiences that God can use us. When God calls you we do ministry where we are in our journey.

**APPENDIX D**

**POST SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE**

## **POST SURVEY QUESTIONNAIR**

**QUESTION 1:** Have these discussions in the past 4 sessions dealing with wounded-ness, hurt, rejection, hope, rising, and succeeding helped you in any way as a clergywoman answering your call?

**ANSWERS 1:** **(Cl W-Sis Pastor) The sessions have made me more eager in my ministry to do more as a pastor. I've learned so much in these sessions that can help me advance further in the ministry and the things that I've learned can also help me better interact with my people in the church.**

**(Cl W-Chapl) It has helped me, no matter how great the hurt don't give up and just keep on keeping on. Don't turn around because of the hurt and how you are being treated. We just have to stand, be strong in the Lord, and just trust Him. Because I don't believe He brought me this far to leave me.**

**(Cl W-Green) What I've gotten out of these sessions has really helped me to see myself and that God has called me and has chosen me for such a time as this. I can't allow the enemy to continue to blackmail me and I must get up and move forward in spite of the past. What keeps coming back to mind is that the past has no power over my future and I have to know that. When I give it that power yes I feel like I can do it, but God said I've given you all power that you can tread on the surface of the scorpions and go forward. It has given me hope that I know what God has called me to do and that's minister to hurt and broken people. Because of what I've been through I can help them get through by speaking the word and giving them encouragement. It has helped me because along the way I have said that this is something that we need. I use to say, "Lord I wish there were some clergy women where we could come together, pray together, and be sisters in the Lord". We need to be able to open up and share and not have the feeling that by the time you finish talking somebody else down the road knows about it. I will say that has been some women's problems because they share and then you can go to church**

and somebody that you know you have not talked to knows about it. That also keeps people from opening up and we carry so much baggage because you feel that someone that you confided in is talking. I just say Lord I need more of this because my wounds go deep and it takes a lot but I'm getting there. I God thank you that I went through what I went through because I went through this for a reason. Peter or Paul said that it was good that I was afflicted and I thank God because now I have time to stay home and get into His word and say Lord here am I, whatever you have for me. I'm not running any more. Clergy women that are sincere can come together and be there for one another because the path is not easy but when you have other sisters in the Lord that are walking this road. We should be able to come together and lift up one another and not tear down one another. We should encourage and love one another. It's like a listening ear and sometimes I don't want an answer I just want you to listen.

(Cl W-Butts) I can say it's just been an out pouring, a releasing.

(Cl W-Chapl) A releasing because sometimes we feel like we are the only ones that have been hurt. To come together and just talk about the things that you have experienced and to know that you don't have to feel ashamed and a lot of times women feel that you can't share because there will be jealousy and fighting over the other person. With all the envying you just tend to stay by yourself until you get around your familiar and you never venture out. You stay back in your own little waiting room and you just continue to be hurt over and over again. When you finally branch out you don't know how to act and say this feels kind of good, I don't mind coming back. You feel the love and it was a good secession. If there was a way that you could reach out and help more women that would be good.

(Cl W-Mother J) It has helped me a lot because sent I've been back home I had not even told the Pastor where I go to church that I was a minister. I'm glad for the transition because I feel unused because I use to doing so much in the church. I was use

to holding classes and so many things but I know God is getting ready to use me in Savannah. This is the first time I've been around all Christian Women and I feel the connection. I feel God in it.

(Cl W-Wright) I just want to piggy back on one thing that she said. I know of other Christian women from other states that have come here and because they did not feel the love in the church they may have been in and they did go back home.

(Bis. Shab) We must rise up in our calling and you will see that you can succeed. Continue to work hard, pray must, trust and believe God.

(Cl W-Butts) The hurt that I've shared here is not out of the past. It's still in the past. It's not a hurt to me anymore but it has brought me to come here, in this place, where I am today. Bishop has been given to me by God as a spiritual Mother and when she tells me that she's having something I'm in her support but this time the enemy has been trying to keep me away. I have been struggling every time to make it to these secessions. God is leading me to build a ministry with Luv-N-Arms. He has given me a church right there. I have had people, adults and children to follow me and I'm looking at it and it is right there. Just before Bishop came to me with the secessions I started to do Bible Study. I have service on Fridays and it seems like the enemy is fighting me in every way. I'm walking in this calling God is leading me to. So every time it time for the secessions the devil is fighting me but every time I step into here it was strength for me. I stepped out here at the last secession with so much strength and I said enemy you better just leave me alone because I'm going to do what God said do. This, my sisters has strengthened me.

It's help me to realize not to give up and to keep going.

## **QUESTION 2:**

Did the dialogue and being in these types of setting help you become more open in your situation, in your ministry work and moving forward to where God want you to be?

**(Cl W-Wright) I'm going to say it helped me when you look at the setting. The word of God says, "You'll know the spirit by the spirit". I don't have to worry about anything I've said being down there on Bay Street. I know ya'll are lifted up in prayer so I thank ya'll.**

**(Cl W-Sis) I think it has helped each and every one of us here because we continue to come back so I think we all have gotten so much out of these secessions. We thank God for you and the Lord leading you in that direction. We hope you much success in your endeavors.**

**(Cl W-Wright) These are my last words. After the women's conference Bishop had in November 2009 here at her church, the Lord began to say to me, "She's going to pull women from the back". Bishop, you are going to call women who feel like they have been passed over and nobody noticed them. Women the enemy has been trying to keeping in the background even here in Savannah. I have to stop allowing the enemy to blackmail me with my past.**

**(Sis. Merd.) Bishop, I just want to say this before we close out. The stigma or shame that goes along with the enemy being able to use your past against you is because it is a secret. If you stop trying to hide your imperfections Satan can't use them against you. If you say this is not my strongest area because I can't do (whatever it is) so well it's not a secret anymore and can be used against you. You let the cat out of the bag and now it's not so bad. Bishop, thank you for helping me see me.**

**(Bis. Shab) PRAISE THE LORD! I THANK GOD FOR ALL OF YOU AND MAY GOD CONTINUE TO BLESS EACH OF YOU.**

**We are going to close out at this time and move on to the next part of our day that deals with our beautiful selves. Please welcome our beauty consultant for today.**

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